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# THE HUNTED LIFE:

OR,

## THE OUTCASTS OF THE BORDER.

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BY EDWARD WILLETT,

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# THE HUNTED LIFE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE OUTCASTS.

"HERE at last!"

"Yes; we are here at last, and we should thank God for His great mercies, for we have been wonderfully preserved."

The first speaker was Samuel Wardleigh, and he was an old man, to judge from his appearance, although hardly more than fifty years had passed over his head. His form, that had once been tall and erect, was now bent and stooping; his hair, that had been as black as the raven's wing, was nearly as white as the driven snow; his sunken cheeks and his lean limbs showed no indications of their former freshness and vigor, and his hazel eyes, once as keen and brilliant as those of the eagle, were now dim and uncertain of vision, as he glanced hurried about him, with an appearance of timidity and suspicion that was painful to behold.

He was mounted on a stout and serviceable horse, and was dressed in the leather hunting-shirt, leggings and fur cap, peculiar to western hunters and pioneers. He carried a long rifle, resting on the pommel of his saddle, and in his belt were a tomahawk and a hunting-knife, while at his left side were suspended his powder-horn and bullet-pouch.

The second speaker was his wife, Maria Wardleigh, who also seemed to be prematurely old and broken down. She rode a rough pony, and her garb was of the coarsest homespun. In spite of her poor attire, the woolen hood which partially shaded her features, and her look of settled sorrow, it could easily be perceived that she had once been very beautiful. There was still a touching beauty in her large and soft eyes, in the expression of her delicate lips, and in the quiet patience and resignation that shone through her



features and made themselves manifest in all her words and actions.

The old couple had been riding a short distance in advance of their "train," which consisted of several pack-horses, laden with their baggage and provisions, and a few young cattle and swine. A young man was driving and guarding the animals, and another young man, riding by the side of a young woman, brought up the rear of the party.

During long days and tedious weeks they had pursued their toilsome way through the wilderness, wearily treading plains and valleys and primeval forests, crossing rivers and water-courses, climbing lofty mountains, and picking their way through difficult passes, until, near the close of one of the autumn months of the year 1780, they found themselves fairly within the limits of Kentucky, the rich and beautiful land of promise which they had been longing to gain.

The settlements of the white men in that territory were then few and scattered, but it was not inhabited by the Indians, with the exception of the region west of the Tennessee river, which belonged to the Chickasaws. It is true that the Cherokees had claimed a large portion of the country as their hunting-ground, but that claim was supposed to have been extinguished by a treaty in 1770, made with the colony of Virginia. The best part, therefore, of what is now the State of Kentucky, may be said to have been open to settlement, and the white man had a perfect right to go into any portion of it, so far as the claims of the Indians were concerned.

The country that lay north of the Ohio river, however, was almost entirely occupied by warlike and powerful tribes of Indians consisting principally of the Miamis, Shawnees, Delawares, Wyandots, Cherokees, Pottawatomies and Ottawas, who had used Kentucky, from time immemorial, as a hunting-ground, and who viewed with increasing dislike and alarm the gradual but sure approaches of the pioneers, the precursors of civilization. To reclaim their ancient hunting-grounds, and to put a stop to the ravages of the axes of the white men, they were in the habit of making incursions across the river, sometimes in small parties, and



sometimes in the full strength of their combined forces ; so that the country could never be said to be at peace, and the settlers were continually watchful and uneasy, for no man could know at what time the savages might pounce upon him, destroy all the fruits of his labor, and murder himself and his family, or carry them off as prisoners.

But nothing could be more peaceful and pleasant than the scene that was spread before the eyes of Samuel Wardleigh and his wife, as they halted on the summit of a mountain, the last of a range which they had been traversing for many days. Below them was a rolling and beautifully timbered country, watered by one of the principal branches of the Kentucky river, which could be seen, in the light of the declining sun, stretching its torturous length toward the northwest, now hidden by abrupt hills, and again shining in pleasant vales. In the distance they could discern a broad and level plain, wonderfully fertile, and abounding in buffalo and elk and all manner of game, a paradise for hunters and an eldorado for farmers.

The old man heaved a deep sigh as he gazed sadly at the glorious landscape, and exclaimed, with a feeling of relief, "Here at last!"

"You are right, my good wife," he continued, without changing his melancholy tone or his downcast air ; "you are right, and we should not fail to give thanks to the merciful Parent who has permitted us to reach this land in safety. I have nothing more to pray for, but that we may be spared all further trouble and pain except such as we bear within our breasts, and from which we can never be delivered in this world. It may be that the wicked may find rest in the next world, as well as those who are only weary, but I fear that I have within me the worm that never dies."

"Say not so," answered the meek and patient wife, looking at her husband with an expression of mournful tenderness. "Strive to throw off your despondency, and to rely upon the mercy of God and the mediation of the Savior, whose blood can wash away all sins."

"Not mine, Maria ! not mine, for I feel that I have committed the unpardonable sin, and that I shall find no rest or peace, here or hereafter. Your words would comfort



me, if any thing could give me comfort, but the curse of Cain is upon me, and I am an outcast and a vagabond on the face of the earth."

"You can never be an outcast from your family, Samuel, and you are not a vagabond while your wife and your children are with you. For their sake you should endeavor to lay aside your gloomy feelings, and to build for them a home in this land, which is too beautiful to be called a wilderness. We are now far from the cruel world, out of reach of the taunting tongues of unfriendly men, and those who hate or despise us will not be likely to seek us in this solitude."

"There is no home for me. I should only build that it might be torn down. I should only clear fields for others to occupy. I should only sow for strangers to reap. I can not flee from the eye of God, Maria, nor can I escape from my own conscience. There is no solitude so deep that an accusing face and an accusing voice can not enter it. My crime has followed me across the ocean, and it has been discovered and made known in every abiding-place that I have sought. Again and again I have been spurned and driven forth, as a creature unfit to mingle with his fellow-men. Again and again I have trod the weary way, to make my abode among strangers, but I have never found rest for the sole of my foot. My crime follows me, Maria, and it must always be a curse to me and to you, and to my innocent children."

"Not to them, Samuel! Surely not to them!" exclaimed the woman, with a sudden gush of tears. "They will outlive it, and it will be forgotten."

"Does not the Scripture tell us, Maria, that the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation? If the justice of God is so stern and exacting, what can we expect from men? Can the tree forget the worm that gnawed at the root of the twig? Can the body outlive the cancer that consumes it internally? If it was not for our children, the burden would not press upon me so heavily. It was for their sake and yours—for the good of my loved ones, as I foolishly and wickedly fancied—that I committed the crime that brought the curse upon me. The gold was accursed, for it melted in my hands and left me in worse estate than before, and since that time nothing that I



have touched has prospered, for my crime has followed me, blasting my hopes and destroying the fruit of my hands."

"Your children, Samuel, are all that a man could desire."

"They are yours, my good wife, and they have no taint of my baseness in their blood. They have all your goodness and charity, or they would desert their unworthy father, and would curse his memory."

"Hush! for here comes William, and he must not hear you talking in that style. He is young, and we should not break his spirit by showing him all our pain."

The young man who had been attending to the animals rode forward briskly to where the old couple had halted, and reined in his horse by their side. His eyes sparkled as he looked down into the valley.

Mrs. Wardleigh's face was lighted up with love and pride as she gazed at her son, and even the old man raised his head and looked at him wistfully.

They might well be proud of him, for William Wardleigh, who was but a year or two past his majority, was a tall and strikingly handsome young man, with such eagle eyes as his father once had, and with the curling hair and blooming cheeks which had been so greatly admired in his mother. His face, it is true, was browned by the sun and by exposure to the elements, and his clothes, which were of the same material and fashion as his father's, were much soiled and torn, but his natural beauty and nobility shone forth in spite of these disadvantages, and no one could look at him without pronouncing him a fine specimen of manhood.

"What a splendid country!" he exclaimed, with enthusiasm. "Did you ever see any thing finer than that view, father?"

"I never did," answered Samuel Wardleigh. "The land is as rich and as fair as could be desired."

"We have only to settle down there, and put an end to our wanderings. A few hundred acres of this land will make our fortunes hereafter."

"I hope that you may remain in it, and that all may be as you desire," replied the old man, as he sighed wearily, and turned away his head.



"Where is your sister?" asked Mrs. Wardleigh.

"She is loitering in the rear, with Dick Hardy. I will call them, for they will be glad to see this sight."

William hallooed, and the two young people rode up, and gazed from the mountain-top with the rest. The girl's cheeks were bright with pleasure as she beheld the enchanting scene, and Hardy's face was flushed as he looked at her. It was easy to see that they were lovers.

Mary Wardleigh's beauty hardly differed from that of her brother, except in being more feminine and of a softer cast, and in her possession of large and liquid eyes, like her mother's. She was slightly built, with delicate hands and feet, but her seat on the horse was firm as well as graceful, and her grasp of the bridle-rein showed that she had full control of herself and the animal she rode. She was dressed in homespun, and her head was covered with a woolen hood; but the garments were made and worn in a tasty manner, and the close hood did not prevent her dark ringlets from straggling and floating abroad as the breeze toyed with them. Three years younger than her brother, she had been accustomed to look up to him, and she regarded him with an affection second only to that which she entertained for Hardy.

Dick Hardy, or Captain Hardy, as he had been known in Virginia, had reached his twenty-sixth year, and was a strong, robust, athletic, active and good-humored young man, who delighted in hunting and all manly sports, who was always foremost in exercises that required muscular power and agility. These qualities, together with his courage and sagacity, and his great predilection for fighting, had always made him a leader among his companions, and he had lately held the office of captain of militia in his native colony. Possessed of ample means, in land and money, he had left every thing to follow Mary Wardleigh, when her family set out on their pilgrimage to the wilderness of Kentucky. Samuel Wardleigh had strongly objected to this addition to his party, but his wife and his son, as well as his daughter, had favored Hardy, and a reluctant consent had at last rewarded the young man's impetuous entreaties.

Hardy wore a hunter's garb, like his male companions, but his hunting-shirt and leggings were ornamented with fringe



and ribbons, and his moccasins were smartly embroidered. His rifle was a long-range weapon, of the best pattern and the finest material, and his powder-horn, knife and tomahawk, were richly wrought, and adorned with inlaid work of silver. His brown hair being cut short, and his beard trimmed close, showed a massive and well-shaped head, and a broad and ruddy face. It could be seen at a glance that he was a warm-hearted, energetic and impulsive man.

"What a paradise we have come to!" exclaimed Mary Wardleigh. "Is that the land, father, which we have traveled so far to seek?"

"I suppose it is," sadly replied the old man.

"I am glad to hear it, for no one could wish to see a more delightful wilderness. I am very glad, too, that we have reached the end of our journey, for I must confess that I am tired of traveling. How do you like our new home, Captain Hardy?"

"If it is as good as it looks, it ought to satisfy any man. For my part, I should consider a desert a paradise, if you were in it. It will be an easy matter to clear that land, and I have no doubt that we shall find an abundance of game in those valleys. During the winter we can build some comfortable houses and a stockade for defense. When spring comes, we will break the ground and plant our crops, and in the mean time our rifles can easily supply us with food. Before long we will have a nice little settlement around us, and then I can bring on some more stock from Virginia, and plenty of other settlers will be attracted to us."

"No more, Captain Hardy; no more!" exclaimed the old man, with a perceptible shudder. "If you speak of men and settlements, you will frighten me, and will force me to push on further into the wilderness, where no other white people will venture. You seem to forget that we are seeking solitude."

"I hope you will forgive me, Mr. Wardleigh, as you know that I am apt to speak without thinking, and to plan too rapidly. I am sure that I desire no other company than I now have, and I will be happy any where, if you will permit me to be near Mary. Do you expect to climb down the mountain to-night?"



"By no means. It is now too late to commence the descent, and we must find a place to camp."

"I have found the very place we want," said William. "It is a deep gorge on the left, in which there is a spring, and I think it will lead us down the mountain in the morning."

When the gorge had been examined, and found to answer the purpose, the cattle were driven into it, and a temporary shelter was erected, by spreading bed-clothing upon slanting poles that rested on forked sticks driven into the ground. A fire was built against a fallen log, and the whole party, after eating their supper, laid down to rest. They kept no guard, as they had reason to believe that there were no Indians in the vicinity, and as the light of the fire was sufficient to keep all prowling beasts at a distance.

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## CHAPTER II.

### A VISIT FROM THE DEAD.

THE travelers were not annoyed during the night, and it is probable that even Samuel Wardleigh forgot his troubles, for a while, in slumber. In the morning they packed the animals, and descended the rugged side of the mountain, reaching the river a little after noon. There they made a camp, and proceeded to examine the country for the purpose of choosing a suitable spot for a residence.

William Wardleigh was anxious to select a location on the bank of the river, near the fertile prairie-land, and his opinion was strongly supported by Captain Hardy and his sister; but his father was inflexible on this point, and chose a site in a deep and sequestered valley, shut in by abrupt hills, and surrounded by a dense forest. It was in vain that it was suggested to him that such a position would be too remote from the fields in which they desired to work, and too easy of attack in case of an invasion by the Indians. He replied that he had come to seek solitude, and not to found a colony or



to acquire riches, and that he would consider the company of the savages preferable to that of white men. As he was not to be persuaded from his purpose, and as his wife silently agreed with him, the young people were obliged to yield.

The men set at work, therefore, and built a house in the valley which the old man had selected. It was stoutly built, of hewn logs, well joined and put together, and was amply large enough for the purposes of the family. The floor, as well as the walls, was made of logs, and the roof was of thick oaken slabs, covered with a heavy coating of adhesive clay. In one end was a large fireplace of stone, with a stick-and-clay chimney on the outside. As no glass was to be had, a window was cut in one side of the house, to be closed, when necessary, by a strong wooden shutter. There was but one door, which was made of logs, and hung on massive wooden hinges. The house was situated near a spring, from which an abundant supply of pure water could be obtained at all seasons, and it was surrounded by an abundance of timber for fire-wood.

When the building was completed, the young men erected a stockade around it, as a defense against the attacks of the savages. The stockade was ten feet high, and was large enough to contain all the horses and cattle of the family, if it should be necessary to drive them in for shelter. The stout oak logs of which it was composed, were set close together, and were well rooted in the ground. It was loop-holed for musketry, and a deep ditch was dug around it.

The work was completed before cold weather fairly set in, and then the outcast family found themselves in possession of an abode which was not only comfortable, but secure as it could be made with the means at their disposal.

Having nothing especial to occupy their attention, the young men employed themselves in hunting, in which pursuit they were both proficient. The country abounded in buffalo, deer, and other game, and they never went out without bringing back loads of meat and skins. A large portion of the meat was dried, for use in case of an emergency, and the peltries were carefully cured or tanned. Some were made to serve the purpose of couches, others were cut into clothes, or fashioned into gear for the horses and cattle, and others were laid aside for sale or for future use.



The winter which ensued was one of extraordinary severity, being known through that country for many years as the "hard winter." The few inhabitants of the scattered "stations," as the settlements of Kentucky were then called, suffered greatly from scarcity of provisions. The stock were unable, in many instances, to find sufficient nourishment, and perished for the want of it. The men were able, it is true, to kill sufficient game with their rifles, but the lack of bread was severely felt by many, and especially by the women and children.

The Wardleigh family—of whom Captain Hardy counted himself one—were obliged to bestir themselves to take care of their cattle and to keep themselves warm. They succeeded in preserving all their animals, and amply supplied themselves with wood from the abundance of the forest. As they had plenty of occupation, the time passed rapidly, and even pleasantly. Mary Wardleigh and Captain Hardy were happy in each other's society. William was industrious and contented, with the exception of an occasional longing for society, and a more active life; his mother was quite cheerful and hopeful; and even the old man seemed to have cast off a portion of his gloom and languor, and to have forgotten his troubles in the solitude which he had chosen.

The severity of the winter, which had been so hard upon the Kentuckians, most of whom were accustomed to a warmer climate, had been a blessing to them in one respect; it kept the Indians within their own country, effectually preventing their incursions for a time. The season of scarcity and hardship, therefore, was one of peace and security, which blessings were fully appreciated by all the settlers.

At the opening of spring, as the Wardleighs had long since exhausted their stock of corn and salt, and as they had but little ammunition left, it became necessary to send to Boonsbrough, to procure supplies. Captain Hardy was selected for this duty, and he set out in March, with two led horses, which were to be loaded with the purchases.

He soon returned, bringing plenty of powder and lead, but only a small quantity of salt, and no provisions, as all the settlements were nearly destitute of every thing, except meat. He also brought the unpleasant intelligence that the Indian ravages had recommenced, that several small parties had crossed



the Ohio, and that a number of scattered settlers had already been murdered. The Indians, it was supposed, were about to make a combined and overwhelming effort to drive the white men from Kentucky, and to regain possession of their hunting grounds.

These things, although they were such as might have been expected, produced great disquietude in the minds of Samuel Wardleigh and his family. The winter had been so peacefully passed, that it was a new and terrible thing to them to dread the approach of savage and ruthless enemies. In this isolated condition, they felt that they could easily be overpowered at any moment, as they were distant many miles from a settlement of the whites, and as they had only two effective fighting men. Samuel Wardleigh had been an expert hunter and a good shot, but his sight was dimmed, and his faculties were impaired, so that he could not be safely counted on in case of a desperate struggle.

Under these circumstances, his son and daughter, together with Captain Hardy, endeavored to induce him to abandon his little settlement, and remove to one of the large "stations," where they might find protection in case of an invasion by the savages; but the old man could not be persuaded to leave his solitude, every mention of such a course being sufficient to inspire him with terror, and to reduce him to a state of gloom and melancholy.

As nothing more could be done, and as it was necessary to raise provisions for their sustenance, William and Hardy set at work to break up the ground, in order to put in their crops. They continued this employment without molestation, until one night when Samuel Wardleigh experienced an alarm which shattered his nerves and by which his family were so greatly troubled that farming operations were temporarily suspended.

All were seated in the cabin on the night in question, as were in the habit of doing, engaged in conversation and useful employments, when the old man, who considered himself able to predict the changes in the weather, stepped out doors to look at the sky, and to judge of the prospect of a fair day on the morrow.

He had been gone but a few moments, when he was heard



to utter a piercing shriek, and all rushed to the door. William was the first to reach it, and was just in time to receive the fainting form of his father, who had nearly fallen against the logs.

He was carried into the cabin, and restoratives were applied, which soon brought back his senses, but it was some time before he was able to speak a word.

As soon as he could articulate, his wife and children anxiously inquired what had happened, supposing that he had been seized with a fit.

"I have seen a ghost," he gasped, turning his pale and horror-stricken face toward his wife. "I have seen *him*, Maria!"

"Who have you seen, father? What was it that frightened you?" asked William; but a glance and a gesture from his mother made him pause in confusion.

"I saw him as plainly as I see you now, Maria," continued the old man in a feeble and trembling voice. "He was looking over the posts of the stockade, and he stared me full in the face. He looked as though he had risen from the dead, with his great eyes and his ghastly visage. He beckoned to me before he faded away, and I know that I must soon go to meet him."

"Hush," said the patient woman, endeavoring to soothe the groaning sufferer. "You have seen nothing, Samuel, except the moonlight shining on some tree or stump, and your excited imagination has made a phantom of it. You must lie down, and I will make some warm tea, that will quiet your nerves, and give you rest."

"I tell you, Maria, it is beyond the possibility of a doubt that I saw what I have described to you, and there was no delusion about it. It is in vain for me to attempt to endeavor to fly from my fate, for it pursues me even into this wilderness. There is no place deep or dark enough to hide me from it, for the very stones would rise up and accuse me. Leave me, my wife; leave me, my children; for I am unworthy to be with you, and it is not right that you should suffer for my sin. Go to the settlements, where you will be safer than you are here, and leave me to die alone, for I am only cumbering the earth and destroying your lives."

Mary and her mother knelt by the old man's side, and



their tears fell upon him, while William held his withered hands in his own. Whatever his crime, pardon and sympathy and love were in those soft eyes and tender voices.

"Leave us, Captain Hardy," he continued. "We are no fit companions for such as you, and you ought not to sully your good name by associating with such a wretch as I am. I know that you think you love my child, but you would have nothing to do with her if you knew all. What would be said of you, if you should wed the daughter of a—"

"That's enough, Mr. Wardleigh," interrupted Hardy. "I don't want to hear another word. You are nervous and out of sorts to-night, and I am afraid you hardly know what you are talking about. You ought to lie down, as your good wife has said, and let her give you something that will cause you to sleep. I do love Mary, sir, more than any thing in the world, and I am not ashamed to confess it. I would never love her a bit the less, if her father had the mark of Cain upon him."

Samuel Wardleigh fell back in his chair with a groan, and fainted.

In this condition he was lifted up and laid upon his couch, where his children busied themselves in restoring him, and his wife prepared a potion, under the effects of which he fell into a troublesome slumber.

In the morning, Captain Hardy and William Wardleigh examined the ground around the stockade, and reported that they found the prints of moccasined feet in several places. On making a closer search, they found other Indian "sign" in the neighborhood, and came to the conclusion that a party of red-men had been prowling near their habitation, one of whom the old man, whose eyesight was none of the best, had probably mistaken for a ghost.

This explanation of the circumstance was satisfactory to the rest of the household, but was far from being so to Samuel Wardleigh. It was sufficient, however, in connection with his illness, to induce the young men to abandon their farming pursuits for the present, and to keep themselves more closely confined to the house and the stockade.



## CHAPTER III.

## ALARMS AND LOSSES.

It was the custom of Samuel Wardleigh to read in his Bible to his family every morning and evening, and to follow the reading with prayer. This practice, which had been temporarily omitted during the illness into which he had been thrown by the shock of his supposed vision, was resumed as soon as he commenced to recover, but was again abruptly brought to an end.

One morning, when he took his Bible from the shelf on which it was always laid, near the only window of the cabin, he found a paper within it, between the cover and the fly-leaf on which his name was written.

"Who has been using this book as a portfolio?" he asked. "Have you not room enough to lay away your scraps of writing, without interfering with the sacred volume?"

As all denied having touched the Bible since it was last placed upon the shelf, the old man took out the paper to read it. He had hardly glanced at it, when he shrieked and fell on the floor in a swoon.

Again the frightened family gathered around him, and again they succeeded in restoring him to life. As it was evident that his swoon had been caused by the paper which he had found in the Bible, Captain Hardy took it from his nerveless hand, and it was read and passed around, before Mrs. Wardleigh, who was busy in attending to her husband, could think of interfering.

It contained these words, written in a large and legible hand, as if with a pointed and burned stick:

*"When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. . . . And the Lord set a mark upon Cain."*

As soon as the old man opened his eyes, he lifted his feeble hand to his forehead, and quickly withdrew it, with a shudder and a moan of pain.



"It is there," he muttered. "The brand is there, and it can never be effaced. God set a mark upon Cain, that he might be known among men. It burns. It is eating into my brain."

Mrs. Wardleigh looked around in wonder, as if inquiring what had been the cause of this sudden attack, and what was the meaning of those wild words, when William silently handed her the paper which had been taken from the Bible. She read it hastily, and then the stricken woman sat down by the side of her husband, and burst into tears.

"My fate follows me, and it is useless to try to escape from it," continued the old man. "My crime clings to me, and I can never shake it off. A fugitive and a vagabond must I be in the earth, and sorrow and suffering must be the portion of all who are near me. It is plain enough now, Maria, that it was no Indian who stared at me over the stockade, that horrible night. It was a face from the dead, sent hither to remind me of my crime, to accuse me before God and man, and to tell me there is no solitude in which I can find rest and forgetfulness. He has been here again, and has left for me his reproach and warning, for you must know that those lines were not written by any mortal hand."

Mrs. Wardleigh was silent, except as her sobs expressed her trouble; her son and daughter appeared to share the feelings of their father; and Captain Hardy was so affected by the strange circumstance of the discovery of the paper, that he could find no arguments to overcome the supernatural theory which the old man had at once adopted.

"You must all leave me, if you wish to find peace and prosperity," said Wardleigh. "Mine is an evil destiny, and it has been well deserved; but there is no reason why you should share it, why your lives should be blighted as mine is. If you remain with me, you can have no safety or happiness until I am dead, and then my torture must commence in earnest. I only wish, for your sakes, that I could die now, that the cause of your trouble might be removed from the earth."

"Do you think we could leave you, father?" asked William. "I am sure that we will love you and care for you, whatever may happen."



"My place is by your side," said Mary, smiling softly through her tears, "and I will never forsake it. You have wronged us in no manner, and we would be cruel indeed if we should desert you. We will pray that your mind may have peace, and that you may forget your sorrows."

"There can be no peace or forgetfulness for me, my children. I feel that I am branded by the same Power that set a mark upon Cain. I came to this wilderness to fly from the presence of my fellow-men, and from the remembrance of my crime; but it pursues me even here, and it will never let me rest. I have seen the face of the dead, and the hand of the dead has written out my fate in those terrible lines, which could not have been placed in that book, as you well know, by any human agency. I know that I shall see that form again, and that I shall feel the weight of that hand, until I am crushed into my grave. Fly from me, my children, as you would from the plague! Leave me, Captain Hardy, and take my dear ones with you! Carry them to some place of security, where they can live in happiness, and where they will be saved from the curse that rests upon me."

"I don't think you could drive me away, sir," replied Hardy, "as long as Mary remains with you, and I am sure that she is too good and warm-hearted to leave you while you are in trouble. I hope your unpleasant feelings will wear out in course of time, Mr. Wardleigh, for I am inclined to think that the disease of your mind arises from illness of the body. To be sure, it seems impossible to explain what we have witnessed this morning, but I have never yet seen any thing so strange that it could not be accounted for in some natural way, and I have no doubt that this mysterious circumstance will yet be cleared up."

The others shook their heads mournfully, for the finding of the paper had settled their doubts, and convinced them that some supernatural agency had been at work.

"Very well," said Hardy. "You will have your own belief, and it is useless for me to attempt to shake it, as all the appearances are on your side. For my part, I am not ready to believe in ghosts, or visions, or any thing out of the natural order of things, and I wish we had some good dogs."

This singular wish brought a smile to Mary's tearful face,



and induced William to inquire why he had happened to speak of dogs at that time.

"Because I think that this house needs watching," replied Hardy. "I do believe, if we had one or two fierce dogs, we would be troubled by no more ghostly visitors or ghostly writings."

Mrs. Wardleigh took the paper which had given her husband such a terrible shock, and threw it on the fire to destroy it; but, just at that moment, a strong gust of wind blew down the chimney, filling the room with smoke, and the paper was caught up by it, and whirled out of the window, over the stockade, and into the forest.

"It is useless, you see, to try to destroy such a witness as that," said the old man. "The winds will protect it, and the birds of the air will carry the story of my curse."

"There was nothing extraordinary in the fact that the paper flew away," rejoined Hardy. "I have seen the same thing happen again and again in this house. I warrant you that the rain and the wind will make short work of that bit of writing."

Samuel Wardleigh, whose nervous system was again completely prostrated, was placed upon his bed, and nursed with watchful care and the greatest kindness, but his recovery was very slow, and the gloom and despondency of his family were so great, that little work was done, and all joy seemed to have departed from among them. They performed only their necessary daily tasks, moving about with troubled and anxious looks, as if continually expecting some new calamity, and wondering in what shape their next misfortune would come.

Captain Hardy did not forget the wish that he had expressed for some good dogs. On the contrary, he repeated it several times, urging that it was absolutely necessary to procure the animals, in order that they might give the alarm, in case Indians or other enemies should come around the settlement at night. As soon as Samuel Wardleigh seemed in a fair way to recover, and the alarm of the family had in some degree subsided, he mounted his horse, and set out, with two led animals, for Boonsborough and Bryan's Station, to procure provisions and other necessary supplies.



He accomplished the journey without difficulty, and brought back a good supply of flour and salt, and two large dogs. He found, on his return, that Samuel Wardleigh had not been troubled with any more supernatural visitations, but that a far greater misfortune had befallen the family, and had plunged them into the deepest affliction.

William Wardleigh, anxious to plant the ground which he had broken up, and encouraged by the fact that no signs of Indians had been seen in that vicinity for a long time, went to work in the fields, and labored faithfully until one day, when he failed to come home to supper at his usual hour, and the fears of his parents and his sister were at once excited for his safety.

Darkness came on, but he did not make his appearance. They waited and watched for him through the long and wearisome night, but the morning did not bring him, and then they could not doubt that some fatal misfortune had happened to him.

The old man walked with difficulty to the clearing in which his son had been working, when he at once perceived that William had been attacked and captured by savages, for the tracks of many moccasined feet and the marks of a desperate scuffle could plainly be seen on the ground. As there was no blood near the spot, the wretched father concluded that his son had been carried off as a prisoner by the Indians, who had probably surprised him while he was at work, and had overpowered him by force of numbers after a brief struggle.

From the tracks that were left in the soft ground, the old man concluded that the party of red-men had numbered six or seven, and the only wonder was that they had not attacked the cabin, of which they might easily have gained possession as it could make but a feeble defense.

As it would have been useless to attempt a pursuit, even if any of them had been able to follow the trail of the savages, Samuel Wardleigh and the remainder of his stricken family could do nothing but await the return of Captain Hardy, and when he arrived it was too late to do any thing toward the recovery of their lost son and brother. Besides, Hardy felt that his presence was so necessary for the care and protection



of Mary and her parents, that he ought not to absent himself on any uncertain expedition.

The dogs which the captain had purchased at Bryan's Station soon came to be regarded as valuable auxiliaries to the little garrison, and as indispensable companions in that solitude. One was a large and powerful mastiff, which was usually kept chained within the stockade, and the other was a fine hound, which was the companion of Hardy's hunting excursions.

Mary Wardleigh became greatly attached to the hound, and the animal reciprocated her affection with all the warmth of his canine nature. Nero was almost constantly at her side when Hardy was not occupied in hunting, and accompanied her in the short walks which she was permitted to take in the neighborhood of the cabin, until he began to be regarded as her especial friend and protector, and the captain declared that if Nero could shoot a rifle, he would have no more fear of trusting her in the care of the dog, than in his own.

It was a bright and beautiful morning in the latter part of May, when Mary called Nero, and went out in the forest to procure some roots, with which to make a drink for her father, who was suffering under a severe indisposition.

The air was balmy and exhilarating, and the dog leaped and bounded on the way, appearing to enjoy the excursion more fully than his fair mistress, being troubled by none of the melancholy feelings with which her heart was burdened. Captain Hardy watched them until they disappeared among the trees, and then resumed the cleaning of his gun.

Mary and Nero were hardly out of sight of the house, when the dog began to exhibit symptoms of disquiet, snuffing at the ground, and manifesting a degree of restlessness and excitement which soon attracted the attention of the girl. Several times he darted forward, as if he had discovered a trail, and then ran back to her and crouched down by her side.

Naturally alarmed by the unusual actions of the dog, she called him at last, and was about to return to the house, when she heard a whizzing noise, and Nero fell dead near her feet, transfixed by an arrow.

Mary screamed, and turned to flee, but she was instantly



seized by a tall savage, who sprang out from a thicket, and covered her mouth with his hand, while her arms were bound by another.

She was then lifted in the arms of the Indian who had first seized her, and was hastily carried through the forest a short distance, until she reached a valley where three other Indians were lying in wait, with their horses tied to the trees.

Mary was placed on one of the horses, and the others were mounted by her captors, who immediately rode away as rapidly as possible, shaping their course toward the north-east.

The attention of Captain Hardy was soon attracted by the moaning and barking of the mastiff within the stockade, which seemed to scent danger in the air, and to be anxious to communicate the intelligence to its master.

Hardy turned the dog loose, and it ran into the forest, but returned in a few minutes, leaping upon him and barking furiously. Hastily telling Mrs. Wardleigh that he feared that something had happened to Mary, he followed the dog into the woods, and discovered the dead body of the faithful hound. From the tracks of the Indians, the nature of the something that had happened to Mary was only too evident, and the distracted young man pursued their trail, until he came to the valley where they had joined their companions, when he perceived that they had retreated on horseback.

As he was unable to follow them on foot, he hastened back to the house to get his horse and his rifle, and to acquaint Samuel Wardleigh and his wife with what had happened.

"It is just as I expected," said the old man, who had become so hardened to affliction that he appeared to feel this terrible blow less than any of his previous misfortunes. "It has been written that I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; that nothing shall prosper with me; that I shall be stripped of every thing, and left to perish alone. It is useless to follow her, Captain Hardy, or to endeavor to recapture her, for the Lord has taken her from me for ever. A portion of my curse rests upon her, and this is the way in which it is to be fulfilled."

Mrs. Wardleigh, who was entirely broken down by this last stroke, said nothing to oppose the determination of the



captain, who took his rifle and some provisions, mounted his horse and rode away on the trail of the savages, leaving the mastiff within the stockade, as the only guard of the unfortunate old couple

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## CHAPTER IV.

MATTHEW GARTLEY.

DURING the rest of the day Captain Hardy rode at as swift a pace as he could keep up, on the tracks of the retreating red-men, but their speed had been almost as great as his own, if not equally so, as he was considerably delayed, at times, by being compelled to pause and search for the trail. He noticed that they had stopped twice on the route, but they had only made short halts, and had continued to press on without much loss of time.

Night overtook him on the bank of a small stream, which the Indians had entered with their horses. He crossed over to the other side, but was unable to find the place at which they had come out. Convinced that they had kept their course in the water some distance, he saw that he would be obliged to make a long and close examination before he could regain the lost trail, and that it would be in vain to seek it without the aid of daylight. As the night was quite dark, he was obliged to wait for morning to renew the pursuit.

He made his evening meal of the dried meat which he had brought in his provision-bag, tied his horse to a tree, and laid down to sleep, without building a fire.

Early in the morning he was awake, and he rode slowly down through the timber, keeping close to the edge of the stream, and dismounting every now and then, to examine the bank carefully for traces of the Indians.

Closely as he looked, scrutinizing every foot of earth and every bush and tree near the water's edge, he could find no sign to show him at what spot they had made their exit, and



he was forced to the conclusion that they had only entered the stream for the purpose of concealing their trail, and that they had probably gone out on the same side that they had come in at.

Angered at the cunning of the red-men, and at the long delay to which he had been compelled to submit, when he felt that every moment was precious to him, he plunged into the water, and was again crossing the creek, when he was startled by hearing a hail, in remarkably good English, from the bank which he had just left.

"Halloo!" he answered, stopping his horse in the middle of the stream. "Who and what are you?"

"A white man and a friend," replied the voice that had hailed him.

As all white men were supposed to be friendly, at that time and in that country, the response was satisfactory, and Hardy requested the stranger to come out and show himself.

In a few moments the bushes were parted near the left bank of the stream, and a horseman came forth from among the trees.

The stranger was tall and lean, withered in face and figure, and appeared to be more than fifty years of age, but in all his motions he gave evidence of strength and activity, as well as of good powers of endurance. No hair could be seen on his head, which was covered with a large cocked hat, of ancient fashion, and his beard had either been closely shaved or plucked out, for not a vestige of it could be seen on his wrinkled face. His eyes were small and keen, his nose was prominent and of the Roman stamp, and his thin lips were so tightly pressed together, as to leave but a line to mark the position of his mouth. He was clad in a hunting-shirt and leggings of dressed deerskin, the usual costume of the borderers, but both garments were highly ornamented, in the Indian style, and several strings of wampum were hung about his neck. In fact, his whole appearance was much like that of an Indian, who had partially adopted the attire and manners of the settlements. He carried a rifle, a tomahawk and a knife, and was mounted on a stout and wiry Indian pony, which was so short that his long legs almost touched the ground. The size of his horse, however, did not seem to



interfere with the freedom of his locomotion, or with the ease and grace of his riding.

When this person made his appearance, Captain Hardy hesitated a moment, and was a little in doubt whether he should receive him as a friend or an enemy; but he was quickly reassured by the voice of the stranger, who again addressed him in good English.

"You have no reason to be afraid of me, my friend," said he, "for I am a white man, whatever I may look like. Where are you going?"

"Across the creek, to hunt a trail that I have lost," answered Captain Hardy.

"I will go over with you, if you have no objection, and perhaps I can help you to find it. It is always thought that two heads are better than one, and I know that the same can be said of two pairs of eyes."

As Hardy made no objection, the stranger walked his pony into the stream, raising his feet up on the animal's neck, and crossed to the other side.

"Give me your hand in token that we are to be friends while we travel together," he said, when he reached the opposite bank. "And now tell me about this trail that you are looking for. I have had a power of experience in hunting trails, and I ought to be able to find it, if any man can."

"A small party of Indians went into the water, about a quarter of a mile above here," replied Hardy, as he accepted the offered hand. "I supposed they had crossed the creek, and I have been looking on the other side to find the place where they went out; but I could see no signs of them, and I came back to this side to hunt for the trail again."

"A small party of red-skins, say you? What do you call a small party? Can you judge how many they were?"

"Five or six, I think, from the tracks of their horses."

"Say six horses, and you hit it exactly. I have seen such a trail, which crossed the water half a mile below here, thereabouts."

"It must be the same party. Doubtless they went into the water to hide their tracks, and came out on this side again."



"It is a common trick with them. Did they have a woman in the party?"

"They did, and it is her that I am seeking. Have you seen them?"

"Can't say that I have; but I have crossed their trail, and it was easy enough to tell that they were five red-skins and a woman."

"Will you show me where they crossed? If you will help me to follow them, I will pay you well for your services."

"I would go with you, stranger, and would do all I could with a cheerful heart, and without wanting any pay or thanks, if I thought there would be any use in following them; but the trail that I saw was a pretty old one, and they must be far out of reach by this time, unless they have stopped by the way, which is not likely. When did you begin to chase them?"

"Only yesterday morning; but I could do nothing last night, and have lost a great deal of time this morning. Ride along with me, and I will tell you all about it as we go."

"Tell me your name, in the first place, and I will tell you mine, so that we may know who we are talking to," said the long stranger, as he dug his heels into the sides of his pony, and easily made the little animal keep pace with Captain Hardy's mettled steed.

"My name is Richard Hardy, and I have generally been called Captain Dick Hardy in my own country."

"My name is Matthew Gartley, and if you have been long in this region, it is likely that you have heard of me."

"I came out from Virginia only last fall, but your name sounds familiar to me."

"Where did the red-skins find the woman?"

"A long day's journey from here, near a large branch of the Kentucky river."

"At what settlement?"

"There is no settlement at the place—only a house and a small clearing in the midst of the forest."

"I would like to know who was crazy enough to try to settle down alone in this country."

"Her father is an old man, who brought his family here from Virginia last fall. His name is Samuel Wardleigh."



Gartley started, and glanced quickly and suspiciously at his companion, but immediately recovered his composure.

"Have you known him long?" he asked.

"A little more than a year," replied Hardy.

"What could have induced an old man, with a family, to leave a pleasant and settled country, and come out here into the wilderness?"

"He had some trouble, which rendered his residence there unpleasant to him."

"He had good reason, I suppose, for wanting to be alone, out of the way of other people."

"He preferred solitude," evasively answered the young man, who was getting a little suspicious and annoyed by this cross-questioning. "Do you know him, sir?"

"Can't say that I do. How much of a family did he have?"

"His wife and two children—a son, and the daughter whom I am now seeking."

"Why did not the son come with you, to help you find his sister?"

"He, also, was captured and carried away by the Indians, about a month or more ago."

"The old man seems to have met with bad fortune. I hope he didn't deserve such luck. How old was his daughter?"

"Between nineteen and twenty, I believe. You ask a great many questions."

"I want to know all the particulars, of course, and it is strange that such a family should have come out here into this wild and dangerous country, and should have built a house at a distance from any settlement. Was the girl good-looking?"

"I think I never saw one who was more beautiful."

"Like her mother was when she was young, I reckon. It is apt to be the way with girls. As she was so very good-looking, I suppose you took a great notion to her."

"Your supposition is not out of the way, and you may also suppose, if you want to, that I am anxious to find her as soon as possible. Let us hasten forward, therefore, and lose no more time in talking."

"I don't believe that you will gain any thing by hurrying,



and I do believe that you might as well give up the search. Here is the place where the red-skins crossed the river, and you can see, if you are experienced in such matters, that the trail is rather old."

"I must follow it, nevertheless, as long as there is a possibility of overtaking them. Will you go with me, or shall we part company here?"

"I will go with you, if you are bound to follow that trail. It shall never be said that Mat Gartley made a friend of a man, and left him when he needed help. Let me lead the way."

The inquisitive old man again crossed the stream, followed by his more impulsive companion, and they took up the trail where it left the water.

It was with feelings of doubt and discouragement that Captain Hardy recommenced the pursuit of the savages, and he was inclined to believe that Samuel Wardleigh had spoken prophetically when he said that it would be useless to follow Mary. Her captors had had so long a start, and he had spent so much time in searching for the lost trail, that his hopes of being able to overtake them were very faint indeed.

Shortly after noon, however, he came to a place where the Indians had halted, and where it was evident they had camped for the night. It was also plain that Mary was alive, and was still among them, for the prints of her feet could easily be seen in the soft ground. Hardy was rejoiced at this, although the savages were still a long way ahead of him, and he begged his companion to ride as fast as he could, promising to reward him liberally if they should overtake and recapture the girl.

They had journeyed but a few hours longer, when they discovered that the savages had made another halt, and that they had divided their party, one portion continuing in a northeasterly direction, and the other heading nearly toward the north. As three horses had gone in each direction, it became a question which of the parties had possession of Mary, and which route the pursuers should take.

"Perhaps," suggested Hardy, "we had better divide here, and each take one of these trails. It is likely that they will come together after a while, and then we will meet again."



"I reckon you are right in saying that we had better split," replied Gartley; "but I don't think that these trails will join."

"Is there no way of telling on which of the trails the girl went?"

"As well as I can judge, it was this one, which leads off to the west," replied Gartley, after he had carefully examined the ground.

"That is the trail which I must take."

"Very well. I will take the other, and will follow it up, as it is possible that I may have been mistaken."

"Good-by! If you should happen to find Mary Wardleigh, you know where to send me word."

"You may be sure that I will take care of her, if I come across her. I wish you would remember me to old Samuel Wardleigh, as it is likely that he has heard of me, and he will be glad to know that I was helping you hunt for his daughter."

The two men rode off in different directions, Hardy forcing his horse to keep up a good rate of speed. He was not able to travel very rapidly, however, as the trail was not an easy one to follow, and his progress was so much slower than he wished it to be, that he could not restrain his impatience. His vexation was increased by his uncertainty whether he was on the right track, for he could find no scrap of dress, or bit of ribbon, to remind him of his lost love.

He was again obliged to encamp, when night came on, as it was so dark that it was impossible to follow the trail.

With the morning light he recommenced the hopeless pursuit, and soon perceived, to his surprise, that the trail which he was following led near the outskirts of a settlement.

He continued to ride at a good pace, but had not traveled much further, when he met a party of white men, who appeared to be returning from some warlike expedition, as there was blood on their clothes, and a wounded man was among them.

Hardy eagerly inquired whether they had seen any Indians, and showed them the trail which he was following.

"You needn't go any further, if you are arter those red-



skins," replied the leader of the party, "for they are clean wiped out, and we have got their horses."

"How many were there?" asked the young man.

"Three of 'em. They were figurin' around these parts yesterday, and we chased 'em last evenin', and caught up with 'em in the night, when we made a finish of 'em."

"Was there a woman with them, or a young girl?"

"In course not, or we should have brought her back with us. Reckon you are on the wrong trail, young man."

"I suppose I am. I followed the trail until it divided, and my companion—a man whom I met on the way—told me that the girl had probably been taken with the party that made this trail. I followed them, and he went the other way."

"Did you happen to l'arn his name?"

"It was Matthew Gartley."

"Should reckon old Mat mought have told you for sartin which way the gal had gone. He can find her, and can bring her back home, if he sees fit to do it. Any how, it can't do any good for you to go back and take the other fork, and the best thing for you is to go with us to the settlement."

As it was plain that there was nothing else to be done, Captain Hardy sorrowfully turned back, and accompanied the white men to the settlement, where he was hospitably entertained. He told the sad story of the misfortunes which had befallen the Wardleigh family, and found abundant sympathy among the warm-hearted pioneers; but they were unable to do any thing to aid him, and could only advise him to remain where he was for a while, in the hope of gaining some intelligence of Mary Wardleigh.

He staid with them several days, during which time he heard nothing to cheer him, and he and his friends came to the conclusion that the Indians had safely crossed the river and that Gartley had abandoned the pursuit.

As the season was getting well advanced, and as Indian incursions were becoming more frequent and dangerous, he was advised to take the remnant of the Wardleigh family to some settlement, without loss of time. Accordingly, he again mounted his horse, bade his kind friends farewell, and sadly turned his steps homeward.



## CHAPTER V.

## MARY IN CAPTIVITY.

MATTHEW GARTLEY smiled, as he watched Captain Hardy until he was out of sight; but it was a sneering and bitter smile, which boded no good to the young man or to the object of his pursuit.

"That was an easy thing to do," he said to himself. "It ain't altogether right to accuse people of wanting sense, when they are not quite as sharp as we are about some things, or I should be apt to call that young chap a fool. I should think that any man with half an eye, who had ever been in the woods at all, might have known that the gal had gone this way. There is a twig of that sassafras tree broken, and it is certain that no Indian would have broken it; and there is the point of her little foot, plain enough, though a red-skin has set his big hoof on it to hide it. But I reckon the young man placed confidence in me, and believed I was giving him the best advice I knew how to give. Many people who thought themselves wise have trusted in Mat Gartley, and have been badly fooled; but I defy any of them to find me out."

The old man—for Gartley was generally called old, although his years would hardly justify the epithet—touched the sides of his pony with his heels, and rode off at a gentle trot.

"It is useless to hurry," he muttered, "and I believe, in fact, that I had better take it easy, though I am impatient to see the girl. She is very handsome, as the young man said. Of course, he would say nothing else, as he is in love with her, but I have no doubt that she is a beauty, for her father was by no means bad-looking when he was young, and her mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. I think I can see the girl, with large and splendid eyes, like her mother's, and such long and abundant dark hair, that it would almost sweep the ground at her feet, if it was loosened and allowed to fall. How beautiful Mary Hemsford was! and how madly I loved her! I told her, again and again, that I should be ruined for



life, unless she would marry me, but she never encouraged me after she met with Samuel Wardleigh. When she became his wife, I swore that I would be revenged upon him, if not upon both of them, and I have kept my oath. It was I who told her father that she had married a poor and worthless man, and excited him against Wardleigh, until he refused to see his daughter again. When Wardleigh suddenly became rich, and made such a show and boast of his wealth, it was I who discovered and made known by what means he had obtained his money. I knew why he fled to America, and I followed him here, to fill the measure of my vengeance. From place to place I tracked him, and, wherever I found him, I drove him forth, to seek a new country, and a people among whom he was not known. He has fled into the forest to escape me, but I will find him even there, for there is no Providence that will prevent me from punishing him, and gaining my revenge. He has lost his son, and now his daughter shall be mine. Yes; this girl shall make the promise which her mother ought to have made, and shall fill the place her mother should have filled. It will be taking the daughter instead of the mother, and I think the exchange will be pleasant to me at my years. She shall be mine, beyond the power of any one to reclaim her, and then Mary Hemsford and Samuel Wardleigh shall know what has become of their darling. The knowledge will kill them, and that will make an end of their punishment—and my revenge. It will please them so well to learn that Mary Hemsford's child is the wife—or whatever she may be called—of Matthew Gartley, that they will die for joy!"

Gartley hugged himself, as if this thought was very pleasant to him, and urged his pony into a brisker trot.

He followed the trail at a good rate of speed, perceiving many indications which led him to conclude that Mary Wardleigh had passed that way. When night came, he made preparations to encamp, although the trail was still quite plain to his experienced eyes; for he was in no hurry, and desired to rest himself and his horse.

He had hardly laid down to sleep, when his quick ear caught the sound of horses approaching, and he mounted his pony warily, and waited for their coming. When the riders



appeared in sight, they proved to be a party of ten Indians, whom Gartley at once recognized as friends, for he rode forward and met them, and they greeted him with much cordiality.

A conversation ensued, during which the savages asked the white man a number of questions, which he answered readily and to their satisfaction, and he gained from them some information which pleased him greatly. Having learned all that they wished to know, the savages rode on, and Gartley returned to his camp.

"All things work together to help me," said he, after he had made a fire, and had placed some meat upon the coals to broil. "Those red-skins will go their way, and will do my work, as well as if I should do it myself, and I will have no hand or voice in it. The two poor old fools will be completely stripped of the little that is left to them, and the last blow which I shall give will be the finishing stroke. I would go there and exult over them, if I hadn't better business on hand. All I have to do now, is to go on and find the girl, for those red fellows who have charge of her will be glad enough to sell her to me, and I can easily overtake them, after they are safe across the Ohio, and before they can carry her to the old chief, Blazed Oak. What an excellent thing it is, that there are two sides to a question, when a man has wit enough to keep on both sides! It is now nearly four years that I have been acting as a spy for the red-skins and the white men at the same time, and neither side has suspected me of cheating, because I have always kept out of danger, and have attended closely to my own interests. It is wrong, as a matter of morality, but it is right, as far as the welfare of Mat Gartley is concerned, and I was placed in the world to take care of him. Mary Hemsford is to blame for all my wrong doing, and she must suffer for it. When her daughter is fairly mine, so that she can never be lawfully taken from me, I will go back to the settlements, and will lead a more moral and less dangerous life."

The wary spy made a hearty supper, and slept as soundly as if there was no weight of sin or crime upon his conscience.

The next morning he resumed his journey, and followed the trail until it reached the Ohio. The river was much swollen at the time, but he found an old canoe concealed in



the bushes near the bank, with which he crossed the turbid stream, making his horse swim beside him.

The two Indians who had charge of Mary Wardleigh had journeyed at their leisure after crossing the river, as they were then safe within their own country, and Gartley easily overtook them, at the expiration of two days after he left Kentucky. He came up to them where they were encamped for the night, one of the Indians having laid down to rest, and the other remaining awake to guard the camp. Gartley was immediately recognized, and was greeted as one of themselves. Mary Wardleigh, who was completely fatigued by the long and arduous journey, as well as overpowered by her sad condition, and by anguish when she thought of her grief-stricken parents, had at length been blessed with a deep and dreamless slumber. The spy went and looked at her, as she lay on the ground, wrapped in a blanket, and he could not refrain from expressing his surprise and admiration, for she was even more beautiful than he had expected to see her.

"Just like her mother, though it scarcely seems possible that Mary Hemsford was such an angel," he exclaimed, as he gazed at her lovely face, which shone as fair as a lily under the mild beams of the moonlight. "If she is so very handsome while she is sleeping, what will she be when she wakes!"

He was so infatuated with the beauty of the girl, that he forgot his temporary caution and discretion, and immediately made a proposition to the Indians for the ransom—or, rather, for the purchase—of their beautiful captive.

The two-red men, perceiving at once how great was Gartley's desire to obtain possession of the fair girl, resolved to take advantage of it, and named an extravagant price. The spy saw the error that he had committed, and chaffered with them for some time. At last he succeeded in making a bargain, by which he was to give them two fine horses and twenty pounds in money, and Mary Wardleigh was to be delivered to him when they reached their home.

When Mary awoke in the morning, Gartley presented himself before her, and she was so overjoyed at the sight of a white man, that she greeted him quite warmly, and his admiration of her beauty increased as he witnessed her expressive eyes, and animated countenance.



"Are you a white man?" she asked, looking up at him beseechingly.

"Reckon I am, though I believe my looks belie my nature a little."

"Have you come to take me away from these savages, and to carry me home?"

"Can't say that I have, my pretty lass. The red-skins are too many for me, and they are in their own country. I must behave myself in these parts, and you will find it best to do as you are told."

"Are you, also, a prisoner here?"

"Not at this present. I have been in such a scrape, but the time for that sort of thing has gone by."

"Who are you, then, sir, and why are you here?"

"Don't ask too many questions, and you will stand a chance not to hear too many lies. You are a wonderful pretty lass, and I reckon you look much as your mother used to look. It's apt to be the case with handsome girls."

"Do you know my mother, sir? Have you ever seen her?"

"Yes; I have seen her, and I once knew her well," replied Gartley, with a bitter sneer.

"Take me to her, sir, for God's sake! I believe you can do so, if you will. Have pity upon me, for her heart will break, if I do not return to her."

"Perhaps I will take you to her, some day; but the time for that has not come yet. All you have to do is to mind what you are told, and the best thing now is to go and eat some breakfast, as the red-skins have cooked something for you, and you have a long road before you."

When the Indians had finished their breakfast, Mary was placed on her horse, and was compelled to resume the march with her captors. Gartley generally rode in the advance, but sometimes he dropped behind, or lingered near her side, gazing at her with evident admiration, but with a sneering and malevolent expression, that made her shrink from looking at him.

She wondered how he happened to be there, among the savages, and on intimate terms with them, until she came to regard him with suspicion, and to fear him even more than her captors. She especially wondered at his declaration that he



had seen her mother and had once known her well, and at the expression of his voice and his countenance, when he made that statement. It might be, she thought, that he was only dissembling, and endeavoring to deceive the Indians, in order that he might take advantage of some convenient opportunity to rescue her; for he had said that perhaps he would take her to her mother some day, but that the time had not yet come. She could place no other interpretation upon those words, than that he intended to assist and befriend her; yet she could not keep from doubting and dreading him. She once summoned sufficient courage to speak to him about her mother, asking him where he had seen her, and when he had known her; but he merely answered that she would learn at the proper time, and roughly told her to hold her peace, and to speak only when she was spoken to.

These conflicting thoughts rendered Mary uneasy, and increased her anxiety concerning her own fate, and that of her parents and Captain Hardy. She knew that she was being carried miles away from her home, and that her escape was a matter of impossibility, unless the white stranger really meant to aid her, or unless Providence should intervene in some signal manner. The capture of her brother had been a very severe blow to her parents, and she felt that her own loss would break them down completely. She was certain that Hardy would use every possible effort to recover her, but what could one man effect against an army of savages? It was idle to hope that he might obtain sufficient assistance, for the Kentuckians had as much as they could do to keep the enemy from destroying their own homes, without attempting to invade the territory of the red-men. It was possible that she might be carried to Detroit, and might there be ransomed by the British governor, or by some officer; but that, like the possible help of Gartley, was a very dim uncertainty, and she felt that she could have no reliance upon any thing except the merey of Providence.

These thoughts and speculations were interrupted for a time, and the current of her cares was turned in another direction, by the arrival of the party at their home, which was a small village, not far-distant from the old Indian town of Chillicothe.



Gartley delivered two fine horses to Mary's captors, and paid them twenty pounds in money, according to his agreement. He then ordered her to dismount from her horse and follow him.

"Come," said he; "you must go with me now, and I will put you in a place of safety."

"Where are you going to take me to?" anxiously asked Mary. "What do you mean to do with me?"

"Never mind, my lass. You shall be well taken care of, I warrant you."

He led her to a wigwam, where he was met by a squaw, who still retained traces of good looks, although she was more than thirty years old. This woman looked at Mary with a curiosity that was mingled with suspicion, and spoke to Gartley in the Indian tongue. He answered her in a manner that excited her anger, for she appeared to reprove him with much earnestness. He replied to her very roughly, and made Mary enter the wigwam, where he seated her on a couch of skins. He then ordered the woman to take care of his horse, and to get something to eat, while he lounged in front of the wigwam, and smoked his pipe with true Indian laziness.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### AN INDIAN ADOPTION.

WILLIAM WARDLEIGH was surprised by the Indians, as his family had supposed, while attending to his farming duties. He sat down under the shade of a tree, against which he had leaned his rifle, and was resting and eating his noon meal, when three savages silently stole upon him, one of whom took possession of his rifle, while the others seized him.

The young man was strong and active, and was determined not to be overcome without a struggle for his life and liberty. He resisted manfully, and once succeeded in breaking away from the two men who were holding him; but



the third Indian came to their assistance, and he was soon overpowered and bound.

His captors mounted him on his horse, which they had found tethered in a thicket, tying his legs so that he could not get loose from the animal, and hurried him through the forest to a glen in which they had their camp, and where they had left their horses. The camp appeared to have been occupied for several days, from which circumstance young Wardleigh concluded that the savages had been lying in wait to capture him or some other member of the family. It seemed strange to him that they did not also attack the dwelling-house and destroy it with its inmates, as they were entirely defenseless; and it was with a feeling of relief that he saw them mount their horses and lead him away toward the Ohio river.

They traveled day and night, with short stoppages for rest and food, and soon reached the river, which they crossed, in the canoe which had brought them over, and which they had concealed for that purpose.

After the first day of their journey, the Indians untied the legs of the young man, permitting him to ride at his ease, and treated him with great kindness and consideration. At night, however, he was securely bound, and during the day he was carefully watched, so that there was no possibility of effecting his escape.

William Wardleigh was sufficiently well acquainted with the Indian character to know that he ought to fall in with their humors, to show an interest in their habits, and to appear contented with his condition. Consequently, he endeavored to seem at his ease, and to shake off all gloomy and anxious feelings. He succeeded so well in his attempts to propitiate his captors, that they allowed him more liberty after they had reached their own country, and became quite friendly with him, almost treating him as one of themselves. They told him, in broken English, that he was a good fellow and a fine young man, and promised him that he should soon be raised to the dignity of a warrior, that he should have a rifle, and that he would become a great man among them.

This was all very satisfactory, and would have suited the active and adventurous spirit of the young man, if he had not been a captive, and if he had not been troubled with



uneasy thoughts concerning his parents and sister. He now saw, more plainly than he had hitherto seen it, their isolate and exposed situation, in which they were at all times liable to be attacked and destroyed by the savages, or reserved for torture or captivity. He shuddered when he reflected on the probable fate of his sister, if she should fall into the hands of the red-men, and he could hardly restrain his impatience as he longed to be free and in a position to defend her. His best hope was, that his father might realize his danger and the danger of his family, and might be induced to accompany Captain Hardy to a place of safety.

To these troubles was added no little anxiety on his own account, for he could not be certain that his captors were not seeking to delude him with false hopes and expectations, in order that his sufferings might be more acute when they were ready to put him to torture and to death. Much as he endeavored to suppress and conceal his uneasy feelings, they troubled him continually, and it was with a sad heart, though he forced himself to wear a cheerful countenance, that he reached his destination, the town of Old Chillicothe.

His captors raised the scalp-halloo when they came in sight of the town, and a large concourse of warriors, squaws, and children came out to meet the prisoner, whom they conducted in triumph to a large board wigwam which served as their council-house. After he had been viewed by as many as wished to see him, and had been duly honored by being made the butt of the jeers and jibes of the squaws and boys, he was taken from the council-house by his captors, and was carried to another large and comfortable wigwam, where he was introduced into the presence of a venerable chief, who was seated there in state.

The chief ordered the warriors to leave the wigwam, and directed that something should be brought for the prisoner to eat; after which he sat in silence, and gazed at William earnestly and with an air of severity.

Young Wardleigh was at once attracted by the appearance of this old man, who was, indeed, quite a remarkable person. Over his high and massive forehead rose a splendid head-dress of dyed feathers, by which his small remnant of gray hair was nearly concealed. Below the crest was a circlet



of silver, interwoven with a fine twist of wampum. His face, where it was not painted, was whiter than is usually the case with the aboriginal skin, and would have been very fine-looking, were it not for the disfigurement of a large scar, which covered the greater portion of his left cheek. This scar, which looked as if it had been caused by a burn, could not be covered by paint, or concealed by any Indian art, and it had gained for the chief his name, "The Blazed Oak." His eyes were dark and piercing, his nose was aquiline, and his lips were expressive of energy and firmness. He was wrapped in a rich scarlet blanket, and wore a large silver medal on his painted breast. His leggings were highly ornamented, his moccasins were covered with fine embroidery, and he held in his left hand a pipe with a long stem, adorned with feathers and ribbons and little bells.

The chief watched the young man intently, until he had finished eating, and then pointed him to a seat, and handed him a pipe and some tobacco. Wardleigh filled and lighted the pipe, and smoked it in profound silence, knowing that it would be out of place for him to speak before he was addressed by the chief.

Blazed Oak continued to puff his pipe without speaking, until the tobacco was smoked out, when he laid it down, and spoke to the young man in good English.

"My young men tell me," said he, "that you are brave and stout-hearted, as well as strong of limb and swift of foot. They say that your eyes are good, and that you can shoot a rifle as well as our best hunters. They think it would suit you to become a warrior, as our life and our ways seem to please you. Have my young men told me the truth?"

Wardleigh perceived, from the style in which the chief commenced to address him, the point to which his words were tending, and he was careful to frame his response so that he should give no offense.

"It would not become me," he replied, "to say that they have not spoken the truth, though I am sure they have said better things of me than I deserve."

"You are afraid to speak well of yourself," rejoined the chief; "but I believe that my young men have not lied to me, unless their tongues were crooked when they said it would



suit you to become a warrior among us. Was that, also, the truth?"

"The honor would be too great for me, and I am not deserving of it. Besides, I have a father and a mother in my own country, who are old, and broken down by sickness and great care, and they are grieving because I have not returned to them."

The brow of the chief darkened, and his aspect became so stern and forbidding, that the young man felt that he had been treading on dangerous ground, and he hastened to make his reply more favorable, as he knew that his only chance of escaping lay in his acceptance of the proposition which Blazed Oak seemed to wish to make.

"But your young men spoke truly," he continued, "when they said that your life and ways pleased me, and that it would suit me to become a warrior. The young can not always stay with the old, and it may be that my parents will forget me in time, for they have another child. My sister will marry, and they will then have a son to console them and take care of them."

"How old is your sister?"

"She is a few years younger than I am."

"Does she look like you?"

"It is said that we are somewhat alike, but she is very beautiful."

"My young men tell me that your father lives alone, far from all other white men. Why did such an old man leave the villages of his people, and hide himself in the depths of the forest?"

"He had been in great trouble, and he wished to be alone," replied the young man, with a deep blush.

"It must have been because he had done some great wrong. I have heard that the white men drive out from their villages those who are very wicked. Many such men have come into our country, and they have stolen our lands and our horses, and have troubled us greatly. What had your father done, young man?"

"If you were again young," replied William, as his face colored with shame, "and your father was an old chief, broken down with years and infirmities, would you ever say that



he had done wrong? Would you not, rather, wish to strike your knife into the heart of any one who accused him?"

"You speak well," said Blazed Oak, smiling grimly. "You are a wise young man, and a good son, however bad your father may have been, and I will ask you nothing more about him. Do you say that you are willing to remain with us, and to become a warrior among us?"

"I suppose it must be so. If I can not return to my own people, I will be contented here."

"You are not so foolish as to think that those who brought you here will make a long journey to carry you back to your own country. As you seem willing to be contented, and as you show a good spirit, you shall be my son, and shall take the place of the one I lost, for I am now old and childless. I had adopted a son from another tribe, and he was a brave and handsome young man, and a skillful hunter and warrior; but he died when he was about as old as you are now, and since his death I have had no son. He was called the Panther, and you shall have his name, as well as his rifle, which I have carefully saved, and his powder-horn and bullet-pouch. You shall become an Indian and a warrior, and then you will be next to me, for I am a great chief, and there is no one to dispute my word."

When the chief had finished his speech, which was quite a long one for him, he lighted his pipe again, smoked a few whiffs, and handed it to Wardleigh, who also took a few puffs, and returned it. Thus the agreement was completed, by which the young man was to become an Indian warrior and the adopted son of a distinguished chief. Blazed Oak introduced him to his wife, a fine-looking squaw of middle age, who was thenceforth to be regarded as his mother. The chief directed her to prepare a couch for him within his own lodge, and to treat him as if he was her own son, a command which she showed a disposition to obey cheerfully.

The process of adoption was not yet complete, however, for its forms and ceremonies were still to be gone through with, after the Indian fashion, and they were both disagreeable and painful to Wardleigh.

The day succeeding that on which he had been received into



the family of the chief, an old Indian came to the wigwam, armed with bone tweezers and other implements, to perform the operation of removing the hair from his head. Wardleigh at first objected to this quite violently; but, when he saw what a storm was raised by his opposition, he submitted to it with as good a grace as was possible. His flowing and glossy locks were stripped from his head—with the exception of a spot, about four inches in diameter, for a scalp-lock—being plucked out almost hair by hair. The process was a long and painful one, occupying the greater portion of two days, and the young man thought that he might about as well have submitted to the torture at once.

He was then taken to the river, where his clothes were removed, and he was washed and scrubbed so roughly, and for so long a time, that it seemed to him as if his skin would be taken off. His pain was a source of great pleasure to his tormentors, who repeatedly assured him that they were rubbing all the white blood out of him, and were rubbing in good Indian blood. Wardleigh could not help thinking that the operation was neither pleasant nor profitable, but he wisely kept his thoughts to himself, as the expression of them would only have made the case the harder.

When these rude ablutions were ended, he was carried to the council-house, where he was dressed in the full Indian style, in the presence of a numerous assemblage of warriors. His scalp-lock was cut and ornamented with ribbons and feathers, and his face, breast and arms were painted in the most approved style.

Blazed Oak then made a speech, in which he recounted his own exploits, and spoke in terms of eulogy of his deceased son, the Panther, who had met with such an untimely fate, and whose place he had been so long anxious to supply with a brave and skillful young warrior. He described Wardleigh as a young man of excellent qualities for a hunter and a warrior, and was worthy and willing to take the place of the Panther, and ended by declaring that he had formally adopted him as his son, and by directing the warriors to receive him into full fellowship as an Indian and a brave. The warriors responded by emphatic grunts of approval, and the ceremony was closed by a grand feast and smoking.



Thus William Wardleigh became an Indian, as far as the efforts of the Wyandots could make him so, and entered with apparent cheerfulness on the duties of his new situation.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### MORE DISASTERS.

CAPTAIN HARDY felt very sad and dispirited as he rode toward home, after his unsuccessful pursuit of Mary Wardleigh. His pursuit had been productive of nothing but vexation, and his sorrow was increased by the thought of what her parents would suffer when the result should be announced to them. If she should continue to be held a prisoner by the savages, it was horrible to think of what her fate might be; but it was possible, and Hardy cherished the hope, that Gartley might yet be successful in tracking and recovering her, and that she would finally be restored through his agency.

It was late in the evening when he reached the house. The inmates were aroused by the barking of the mastiff, and Mrs. Wardleigh hastened to admit him within the stockade. Her countenance at once fell when she saw that he had returned alone, and it was in a sad and hopeless tone that she asked him what news he had brought.

Hardy could only reply by a mournful shake of his head. He tied his horse, and went into the house, where he found Samuel Wardleigh sitting up, but in a very feeble condition of body and mind.

"It is just as I expected," said the old man, at once comprehending that Hardy had been unsuccessful. "I told you that it was useless to attempt to follow her, for a portion of my curse rests upon her, and it is thus that it is to be fulfilled. We will never see her again, for God has taken her, and he means to destroy her as a punishment for my crime. His Word has said that the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children, even to the third and fourth generation."

"You have no right to be so despondent," protested Hardy.



although his sorrowful countenance belied his words. "I do not believe that the Almighty is as cruel and unpardoning as you picture him. I believe that all sin may be atoned for by proper repentance and reliance upon the merits of the Savior. While there is life there is hope, as a good old proverb says. For my part, I am not ready to lose hope, for I have reason to think that Mary may yet be restored to us. There is one chance left, at all events."

"What do you mean? What chance do you speak of?" eagerly inquired Mrs. Wardleigh.

"I left a person in pursuit of her, who was able to find her, I believe, if any man could do it. Perhaps he has recovered her, and has not yet been able to bring her home. Perhaps he has tracked her to some Indian village, and has since been waiting for an opportunity to rescue her. This may be a feeble hope, but I am not ashamed to cling to it."

"Who was he? What reason have you for thinking that he was better able to find her than you were?"

"He was an old hunter and borderer, well acquainted with this country and with the Indians. I met him the morning after I started, when I had lost the trail at a small stream, and was searching for it. He told me where to find the trail, and finally agreed to assist me in the pursuit. We followed the trail together, until it divided, half of the Indians going one way, and half of them the other. We separated at the same place, and I took the trail which the stranger pointed out as most likely to be the one on which Mary had been taken. I followed it, without seeing any indications to show that she had passed that way, until I met a party of white men, from whom I learned that the Indians who made the trail had been overtaken and killed, and that there was no woman among them. My friend took the other trail, and he must have been soon convinced that he was on the right track, for he had told me that there was a woman with the Indians."

I informed him what I was seeking. I am inclined to believe that he continued to follow the trail, and I still hope to hear from him."

"Did he seem to be a good man—an honest man?" asked the old lady.

"Our Kentucky pioneers are generally honest and simple."



hearted men, but it is difficult to tell the real character of any one of them, until you become acquainted with him, for they are quite silent and reserved, and are not ready to express their real thoughts before a stranger."

"But you have surely formed some opinion of him. Do you think that he would take good care of Mary, if he should find her, and that he would bring her home?"

"I considered him a plain-spoken and well-meaning man. He was tall and lean and quite old. He was almost as dark as an Indian, and was dressed much in the Indian style. He told me that I might be sure that he would take good care of Mary, if he should come across her. He was very particular in making inquiries about her family and herself—so much so, that I was inclined to reprove him for being too inquisitive."

"Who was he? Did you learn his name?" asked Samuel Wardleigh, suddenly becoming interested in the conversation.

"I was going to tell you, sir," replied Hardy, "that he desired me to remember him to you, saying that you had probably heard of him, and that you would be glad to know that he was helping me to find your daughter. This circumstance gave me more confidence in him. His name, he said, was Matthew Gartley."

"Matthew Gartley!" exclaimed Mrs. Wardleigh, as she uttered a shriek, and lifted her eyes toward heaven, as if praying for protection from some impending danger.

"Matthew Gartley!" responded the old man, with a deep groan. "Can it be that that wretch, that fiend, is in this country, and that it is possible for him to gain possession of my daughter! Are you sure that he called himself Matthew Gartley? For God's sake, say that it was some other name. This is the worst of all. Better that Mary should be held by the most merciless savages, than that she should fall into his clutches. The hand of God is heavy upon me, but I could never have expected such a blow as this."

"What is the matter?" inquired Hardy, who had listened to this outburst in utter amazement. "Who is the man? Why are you both so deeply affected by the mention of his name?"



"Matthew Gartley is the worst, the most bitter, and the most merciless enemy of myself and my family," replied Samuel Wardleigh. "He loved my wife when she was young, and when she married me he vowed vengeance upon us both. He has been able to keep his vow, for he knew all about my crime, and he did not fail to make use of his knowledge. He followed me to America, where he has never ceased to persecute me. He has driven me from place to place, until he has finally sent me out into this wilderness. I hoped that here I might find rest, that I might be freed from his persecutions; but my hopes were in vain. From him, more than from all other men, I wished to hide for ever; but he has found me out, and he will never leave me, until he has the last ounce of flesh and the last drop of blood. It is too terrible to think that my child may be placed in the power of my mortal enemy."

"And it is to such a man that I have given a clue by which he may find Mary!" exclaimed Captain Hardy, in tones of the deepest anguish. "I wish I had known of him before, that you had told me about him in time to put me on my guard; but it is now too late to remedy what has been done. I can only promise that hereafter I will be suspicious of every man I meet, and that no one shall obtain from me the slightest particulars concerning you. I would have shot the man down, if I had even suspected that he entertained any designs against you or Mary. Instead of putting him out of the way, I have given him the very chance that he wanted."

"Thou shalt do no murder!" solemnly replied Mrs. Wardleigh. "You were not to blame, for you knew nothing about the man, and you could not have guessed that he was acquainted with our history."

"You would not have been justified in killing him," said Samuel Wardleigh, "and the act would have been a curse that would have followed you and clung to you like a curse for ever. We must submit to the decrees of Providence, and you must not be troubled by the thought that you have done wrong, for no fault can be imputed to you."

"I see it all now," continued Hardy. "The reason of his particular inquiries concerning you and concerning Mary is too evident. He feigned a reluctance to follow the trail with me,



but he only wanted to shake me off, that he might pursue her alone. It is plain that he knowingly and insidiously advised me to take the wrong trail, because he wished to get her into his possession. It was useless for me to wait for intelligence of him, and it is vain to expect to hear from him now, as he never intended to give me any information, whether he succeeded in the search or not."

"Nothing can be done now, I presume," said Mrs. Wardleigh. "Mary is either in the power of the savages, or in that of Matthew Gartley. If the Indians have her, they have carried her across the Ohio, to their own country, where they are beyond our reach. If Gartley has got her, he will place her where no power can discover her hiding-place."

"I shall not cease to hope, even though I may be hoping against all hope," replied Hardy. "Neither shall I give up my search, which I now wish I had continued without stopping to await the movements of my false friend. I will seek her again, and will never cease my efforts, until I recover her or perish in the task. But I must first take you to a place of safety, for I will not be able to protect you, and it will not be proper for you to remain in this remote spot, where you are continually liable to be attacked by the Indians."

When Captain Hardy sat down to supper, he noticed that a glass of water was placed by his plate, instead of his customary glass of milk, and he inquired the reason of the change.

"We have no more milk," replied Mrs. Wardleigh. "Our cows are gone."

"What has become of them? What new disaster has happened to you?"

The old lady looked anxiously at her husband, as if doubting whether she should answer the question. As he gave no sign of disapproval, but merely buried his face in his hands, she continued:

"The Indians came about here again, a few days after you left, and destroyed our little field. They drove off all our horses, except three that happened to be within the stockade, and killed all our cows and other cattle. We are now stripped of every thing, and it seems impossible for us to exist here any longer."



"You surprise me!" exclaimed Hardy. "You say that three horses that happened to be within the stockade were saved. How was it that the Indians overlooked them? Why did they not enter the stockade and the house, and slaughter you as well as your cattle?"

"It passes my comprehension. They were not many in number, but I could count eight or nine at a time, and there was nothing to oppose them."

"You could have offered no resistance, of course, and they must have known that the house was inhabited. The dog, I suppose, gave an alarm."

"He barked furiously, and the savages might also have seen the smoke from our chimney. I took down the shot-gun that hangs yonder, determined to sell my life as dearly as possible, but I was not troubled, except by their yells and screeches, which continued through the greater part of the night. They did not come near the house, although they were all around it. I can attribute our safety to nothing else than the interposition of Providence."

"Is it not written," exclaimed the old man, "that God set a mark upon Cain, so that every man might know him, and no one should kill him? I am branded with the mark of Cain, and a curse is upon me and my family. The fire will pass by me, and will not destroy me; the savages and the wild beasts will devour my substance, but will not slay me."

"It is impossible for you to exist here," said Hardy, after a while. "You have now scarcely any thing left that will support life, and you must go where money will buy at least the necessaries of existence. The savages will come again, doubtless, and the next time, if they do not take your own lives, they will destroy your house, and leave you no shelter. You must permit me to remove you, Mr. Wardleigh, without loss of time, to Bryan's Station, or some other settlement."

"I will think about it," answered the old man. "We do not desire you to remain to protect us, Captain Hardy. We would not ask you to do so, if you were able to. You had better go your way, and leave us to ourselves and to the destruction that awaits us, for we have no right, and no desire to include you in our calamity."



"I can not leave you," persisted Hardy. "For Mary's sake and for your own, I must place you where you can be safe and comfortable, and then I will proceed on my search for her. I beg and implore you to accompany me without delay, for I wish to commence my search as soon as possible. Mrs. Wardleigh, I hope you will help me to persuade your husband to take this reasonable and necessary step."

"I would gladly do so," replied the old lady, "but I fear that it would be useless, for he is so greatly opposed to society that I sometimes think he would prefer to die in the wilderness, rather than return to the settlements."

"Don't let me stand in the way of your safety and comfort, Maria," said Samuel Wardleigh. "Go with Mr. Hardy, and leave me here to my fate. I am not worthy to be with you, and should never be any thing but a trouble and an incumbrance."

"You know well that she would never leave you, Mr. Wardleigh," said Hardy. "I pray you, for her sake, if not for your own, to talk in a more reasonable and practical manner, as this is a subject which requires immediate and earnest attention."

"I will think of it, Captain Hardy. I will try to think of it, though the effort will be a severe one. I suppose I will be forced to come to the same conclusion which you have reached, and it may be for the best, as it is useless for me to attempt to fly from my fate."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### A DISCOVERY AND AN ARREST.

CAPTAIN HARDY at last succeeded, after much persuasion, in extorting from Samuel Wardleigh a reluctant consent to the proposed removal to Bryan's Station; but the consent having been wrung from him by necessity, and not having come from the heart, it was as difficult to induce him to act



upon it, as it had been to obtain it. The very proposition troubled the old man so greatly, that he worried himself into a fever, from which he was slow to recover, and then he declared that he was too weak and ill to bear removal. Finally, having exhausted all arguments and pretexts, he was induced to start, with many lamentations and misgivings, and the hegira was commenced, near the close of autumn. Hardy mounted himself and the old couple on three of the horses, and packed upon the other as much clothing and other necessaries as it could carry, and thus they set out through the wilderness.

They made the journey without much difficulty, and reached Bryan's Station without having experienced any molestation. Hardy had already employed some men at the settlement to build a small log house, in which he placed his old friends as soon as he arrived there. The habitation was humble, but was a comfortable one, and was so made that it could be closed against both friends and enemies. The young man furnished it as well as he could, and stocked it with provisions, and prepared to commence his search for Mary Wardleigh.

In Bryan's Station, as in all small settlements, every man was supposed to know all about the business and habits of his neighbors, and there was, as a matter of course, some curiosity to learn who and what the new-comers were; but they kept so close within their own abode, where they lived under an assumed name, that curiosity was gratified only to a very small extent. Captain Hardy was the only one who went abroad, and he informed all inquirers that Mr. Stout—the name which Samuel Wardleigh had taken—was a sickly and infirm old man, who was unable to leave his house, and that his wife's time was entirely occupied in attendance upon him. The warm-hearted pioneers pressed upon them offers of friendship and assistance, which were gratefully and politely declined, and at last the old couple were left, as they desired to be, entirely alone.

Samuel Wardleigh's health and spirits improved considerably during his quiet residence at Bryan's Station; but his mind was by no means at ease, for he was continually troubled by haunting fears of the future, as well as by grief for



the loss of his children. His wife, who had been sorely stricken when William was taken from her, had lost all hope and consolation after she was deprived of Mary, and pined away rapidly, until she seemed to be but the wreck of her former self.

It was a source of consolation to them that they neither saw nor heard anything of Matthew Gartley, and they hoped that they were at last relieved from his persecutions. This hope, however, was mingled with fear that he had gained possession of Mary, whom he had conveyed to some secret retreat, where she would be entirely at his mercy. It was more than possible that it was for this reason that he remained away and ceased to trouble them for so long a time, and Samuel Wardleigh said that if Gartley should accomplish his purpose, he would not be slow to inform them of the fact, in order to add the bitterest drop to their cup of sorrow.

As for Matthew Gartley, their fears for him were in some measure allayed, when Captain Hardy returned from his search after the expiration of about three months.

He had set out alone, on horseback, with nothing but his arms and ammunition, and with no hope but God and the justice of his cause. He crossed the Ohio with great difficulty, and soon found himself within the Indian country. He then concealed his horse, and made the best of his way on foot, as he felt that he would thus be able to move more stealthily, and to avoid the observation of the savages.

His task was in reality, a hopeless one, and he soon found it to be so, though he still continued to hope against hope. He had no possible clue by which to trace Mary Wardleigh, and he could not enter the Indian villages in which alone he could expect to find her. He hung around them, traveling from place to place, with steady determination and untiring perseverance, vainly looking for a face that he could not see, and for a form that never appeared to him. On several occasions he was discovered and pursued by the Indians, but he always managed to elude them, and to make good his escape.

It was a dreary and painful business—that lonely tramp of hundreds of miles through the unbroken wilderness, with no



shelter from the cold and storm, continually on the watch to guard against the wiles of the savages, searching as a man might search for a needle in a haystack, or for one particular honey-bee in a vast clover-field. There were times when the young man's heart failed him, and when he would lie down on the ground at night with a feeling of despair and utter hopelessness; but the morning's light brought with it renewed efforts and determination, and he still pressed on, faithful to the object of his pursuit, with an eye single to the recovery of his lost darling.

At last he was compelled to abandon his search for the season, as heavy snows had begun to fall, and he could not expect to remain in that country during the winter. Even if he had been able, shelterless as he was, to endure the rigors of the climate, his enemies could have so easily tracked him in the snow, that his capture would have been certain. There was nothing for him to do, but to abandon the useless quest, and return home.

He set out accordingly, and had nearly reached the place where he had concealed his horse, when he came suddenly, one cold evening, upon a party of Indians.

They were sitting around a large fire, and he might easily have become aware of their presence sooner, if his mind had not been entirely occupied by thoughts of Mary Wardleigh and of his unsuccessful search. As it was, he narrowly escaped capture, and was glad to seek cover as soon as possible.

The Indians were twelve in number, and they were talking together and cooking their supper, the smell of which was so savory that Captain Hardy longed to be with them. He had watched them but a few minutes, when they were joined by a white man, who came from the south, and in whom Hardy quickly recognized his quondam friend, Matthew Gartley.

A suspicion immediately crossed the young man's mind. He had heard Gartley spoken of, at Bryan's Station and at other points, as a very useful person, who had rendered valuable services to the Kentuckians as a spy and a scout, and who was generally regarded as a valuable and trustworthy man. What was this reliable man doing among a party of



Indian warriors? He was evidently on good terms with them, for they received him cordially and even eagerly. Hardy's curiosity was so strongly excited upon this subject, that he determined to learn, if possible, something definite concerning Gartley's business there. For this purpose, he carefully crawled up, until he was so close to the party, that he could hear all that was said.

The conversation was in the Indian tongue, but Hardy was sufficiently acquainted with the language to ascertain its general purport.

"You are late, brother," said an old warrior. "What news do you bring from the cabins of the Long Knives?"

"Yes, I am late," replied Gartley. "I expected to be here at daylight, but it was hard work to cross the river. As for the news, there is nothing particular to tell. I have been among the Long Knives, as you call them, and have talked with them. The fools think that I am one of their best friends, and they tell me all they know. They would kill me, quick enough, if they knew that I was a red-skin at heart."

"Are they building more forts? Are soldiers coming to them? Are their numbers increasing?"

"Just all of that, Chickagooch. General Clark is forming a big army, and all the settlers are making ready for hard work in spring. They don't expect us this winter, of course, and we can't go there, but great preparations must be made to strike them a hard blow as soon as the season will permit, and wipe them away. It is our last chance. If the Long Knives stay in Kentucky another year, they will be there for ever."

Captain Hardy had heard enough to convince him that Gartley was playing a double part; that, while pretending to act as a spy for the whites, he was making the same pretense toward the red-men. He felt a strong impulse to shoot the rascal through the head, but was restrained by considerations of his own safety, and by the hope that he might yet discover, through the means of Gartley, the whereabouts of Mary Wardleigh.

He quietly crept away from the party, and went to the place where he had left his horse. He found the animal there, hal-



starved, and glad to see him. After one more lonely bivouac in the dangerous country, he recrossed the Ohio, with great difficulty and considerable peril, and returned in safety to Bryan's Station.

Samuel Wardleigh and his wife were glad to hear of the important discovery that Hardy had made, for it induced them to hope that they would be relieved from the persecutions of their greatest enemy. If Gartley should seek them at Bryan's Station, he would undoubtedly be arrested as a spy, and treated as such, and would then be effectually put out of their way.

They were doomed to a severe disappointment. One winter evening, while Captain Hardy was absent from the house, Matthew Gartley himself lifted the latch, and walked into the room in which the old couple were sitting.

"You seem to be very comfortable here, Samuel Wardleigh; and you, too, Mary Hemsford," he said, as he coolly seated himself by the fire. "You are too comfortable to suit me, and I am afraid I must send you on your travels again. You thought you had escaped me, but that, you see, is impossible."

Neither of the old people answered him. Neither was able to speak. Samuel Wardleigh leaned back in his chair, with a look of unutterable despair; while the expression of his wife's countenance was that of fear and horror.

"You don't speak to me," resumed the spy. "Is that the way you treat an old friend? Look here, old man; how do you like this? It seems to me that it suits your case as well as any piece of writing that could be made."

As he spoke, he held up a scrap of paper, on which were these words, written in a large and legible hand, as if with a pointed and burned stick:

*'When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. \* \* \* And the Lord set a mark upon Cain.'*

It was the indentical paper which had been so mysteriously found in the Bible, which Mrs. Wardleigh had attempted to destroy, and which had been blown out of the window into the forest.

"It is just as I said," muttered the old man, with the look



of one who awaits the blow of the executioner. "I said that the winds would protect it, and the birds of the air would carry the story of my curse."

"You know this paper, then," said Gartley, chuckling and rubbing his hands. "I found it in the woods, and I thought it suited your case so exactly, that I would bring it to you. There is something strange in what you say about the winds and the birds of the air, but it is true, as you see. Don't be afraid of me, for I think I will let you stay in this place a little longer, as I may have some good news for you, and shall want to know where to find you. By the way, Samuel Wardleigh, what has become of those two children of yours? I don't see them about here this evening."

The old man could not answer, for he had fallen from his chair, and lay on the floor in a faint.

Gartley advanced toward Mrs. Wardleigh, who sat as if she was stupefied, but was suddenly interrupted by the arrival of Captain Hardy and a party of settlers, who arrested him as a spy, and immediately removed him from the dwelling.

He stoutly denied the charge, but showed visible signs of agitation when he was told about the interview which Hardy had witnessed on the other side of the Ohio.

He was taken to an empty cabin, in which he was to be confined until he could be tried, and a guard was placed over him.

Captain Hardy, burning with impatience, and anxious to extort from Gartley, if he knew it, the secret of Mary Wardleigh's whereabouts, soon obtained admission to the cabin, and stood face to face with the captive. Gartley received him with a sinister expression of countenance and a bitter sneer, which augured badly for the young man's hopes of receiving any intelligence from him.

"I think I have seen you before, young man," said the spy, "and I can't say that I am glad to see you again. What do you want of me?"

"When I first saw you, Matthew Gartley," replied the young man, endeavoring to control his agitation, "we were together following the trail of a party of Indians, who had carried off a young lady named Mary Wardleigh. We came to a place where the party divided, and you advised me to take the wrong



trail, while you followed the right one. I wish to know whether you came up with the party, whether you obtained any intelligence of the girl, and if so, what became of her."

"And what if I don't choose to tell you?" sneeringly replied the spy.

"I beg you, I implore you to do so. I love that girl with all my heart, and my life is bound up in hers. If you have the feelings of a man, you will not hesitate to tell me what you know about her."

"Young man, you must have the impudence of the devil himself. It is with a mighty good face that you come and ask a favor of me, when you have just had me arrested as a spy."

"I will procure your release. I will retract the statement. I will do any thing you may ask, if you will tell me what I wish to know."

"I don't ask any release at your hands," replied Gartley, with a laugh. "The charge is a false one, and it can't be proved, except by your word, while I can prove my character by many better men than you are. I warn you that if you press the charge I will show up the character of your friends, the Wardleighs."

Captain Hardy's brow darkened, and he drew a pistol, which he leveled at Gartley's head.

"Matthew Gartley," he said, in tones of deep emotion, "I am determined to have that secret, and I will force it from you, if I cannot persuade you to give it up. Unless you tell me what has become of Mary Wardleigh, you are a dead man."

Gartley drew himself up, and folded his arms, with true Indian stoicism, and looked his adversary full in the face.

"Shoot me if you wish to, Captain Hardy," he coolly replied. "I dare you to do it. You would be hung for the deed, and the secret, if I have any, would die with me. Whether I have such a secret, or whether I have not, I shall tell you nothing about it. If I knew where she is, I would inform you. If I did not, I would not tell you so. I defy you. I am not afraid to die, but you are afraid to shoot."

Conquered by the firmness of the resolute old borderer, and convinced that persuasion and intimidation were alike futile, Hardy dropped his pistol, and left the cabin without uttering another word. He was doubtful whether he ought to press



the charge, after the threat that Gartley had made concerning the Wardleigh family; but his doubts were soon removed, for the settlement was electrified the next morning by the news that the prisoner had escaped by some mysterious means, and that his guard lay dead at the door.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### JEALOUSY AND ITS RESULTS.

THE old squaw in Matthew Gartley's wigwam looked very suspiciously at Mary Wardleigh, when the girl was brought in there, and she was ordered to take care of her. Her looks, indeed, indicated something more than suspicion; they spoke of that most bitter and malevolent of all passions, jealousy. It was plain to be seen that she had at once come to the conclusion that Gartley had brought home a new squaw, a young and beautiful squaw, who was to share his wigwam, and to supersede herself in his affections. It was not strange, therefore, that she regarded handsome Mary Wardleigh with an evil eye, and was reluctant to do any thing that might please her or conduce to her comfort.

She obeyed the commands of her master, however, as an Indian drudge is bound to do, and prepared some stewed venison, which was served up in wooden bowls. Gartley invited Mary to partake of this supper; and she endeavored to comply with his request, but she was unable to eat a mouthful. Her heart was full of grief at her forced separation from her home and from the parents whom she loved. More bitter still was the thought that she was separated from him upon whom she had placed her affections, and who loved her so truly, that he had followed her family into the wilderness, for the purpose of being near her, and protecting her. She could well imagine the condition into which her parents would be thrown, when, after having experienced the loss of their son, they should discover that they had also been robbed of their daughter. She could also conceive of the sufferings of Captain Hardy, on finding



that the lady of his love had been torn from him by savage hands. She well knew that he would follow her, and would endeavor to rescue her; but she also knew how hopeless the task would be, and what dangers lay in the way of the undertaking. She trembled for her lover, even more than for herself.

Her only hope, as she thought, was in the man who had brought her there. It could not be possible that a white man, even though he lived among savages, could entirely forget his sympathies for his own race. She knew that he had ransomed or bought her from the Indians who captured her, and it was reasonable to suppose that he had done so with the purpose of ultimately returning her to her parents. He had said that he had seen her mother, and that once he had known her well. She did not like the sneering and malevolent manner in which he had made that statement; but he was a strange man, and it might be only his way. If he had known her mother, who was so good and so generally beloved, it could not be otherwise than that he meant to befriend her.

Her present state of uncertainty and suspense, however, seemed worse than any fate that could possibly befall her, and she determined to ascertain, if she could induce the white man to tell her, what was in store for her. It was with this view that she tremblingly addressed Matthew Gartley.

"I beg you to tell me, sir," she said, "why I have been brought here, and what is to become of me. I think you mean to take me back to my friends, but when will you do it? I beseech you to tell me something definite, for this suspense is agony to me."

"You had better not talk so much," answered Gartley, pointing to the squaw, "for that woman understands English."

Supposing this to be a friendly caution, Mary was silent, and endeavored to eat something, but was unable to do so.

When he had finished his meal, Gartley ordered the woman to leave the wigwam. She scowled a protest, but obeyed his orders, and then he turned upon his seat, and looked Mary full in the face.

"What makes you suppose," said he, with a cold and sneering manner, "that I intend to take you back to your friends?"

"You told me," replied the troubled girl, "that perhaps you would take me to my mother, but that the time had not yet



come. I wish to know when the time is to come, if you will have the kindness to tell me."

"Perhaps I may take you to her some time, but there is much to be done before the time comes. It may depend upon yourself how soon you shall see her."

"What do you mean? You said that you had seen my mother, and that you once knew her well. Did you not love and respect her enough to be a friend to her daughter in time of trouble?"

"I will tell you all, girl, for you may as well know the truth now as at any other time," answered Gartley, in a harsher tone, and with a more bitter sneer. "Did you ever hear of Matthew Gartley?"

"I think I have heard the name, but I know nothing about the man."

"I am Matthew Gartley, and you will soon find out who and what I am. I did know your mother well in England, and I loved her well, better than any one else could love her. She seemed to return my love, and I felt sure that I could make her mine; but there came along a worthless but handsome fellow, named Samuel Wardleigh, and him she married, against the wishes of her parents. I swore that I would be revenged upon both of them, and I have been. I became acquainted with the particulars of the crime which Samuel Wardleigh had committed, on account of which he was compelled to fly from England. I followed him to this country, and have been on his track ever since, driving him from place to place, and giving him no rest, until he has sought to hide from me in the depths of the wilderness. I shall continue to follow him, until the full measure of my vengeance is completed. I suppose you are now ready to conclude that I am your father's worst enemy."

"God help me!" muttered Mary, as she quickly perceived the full danger of her situation.

"It shows," sternly continued the old man, "that I did not buy you from the Indians for the purpose of doing Samuel Wardleigh the great favor of returning his daughter to him. That would be too much to expect of Matthew Gartley. I have said that perhaps I would some time take you to your mother, and I meant what I said. I shall complete my



vengeance by taking you to see Samuel Wardleigh and Mary Hemsford, as soon as possible after you become my wife."

"Your wife!" shrieked the terrified girl. "What do you mean?"

"I always mean what I say. I mean that I intend to marry the daughter of the woman who should have married me long ago. I mean that Mary Wardleigh shall occupy the place that should have been occupied by Mary Hemsford."

"That is impossible," replied Mary, with spirit. "I am already engaged to be married to one of the best men that ever lived, and I love him with my whole heart."

"I have seen him," coldly replied Gartley. "He was in pursuit of you, and he gave me the information by which I was enabled to follow and overtake you. I put him on the wrong trail, and followed the right one myself."

"He will still seek me, and will yet deliver me from your power," exclaimed Mary.

"It would require an army to do that, and then it would not be done," answered Gartley, with one of his sneering laughs. "You have nothing to hope for, except in submission. I will be kind to you, but it is certain that you must become my wife."

"I will die first!" resolutely replied Mary.

"You talk wildly. You had better submit to what can't be helped. The foolish missionaries require the consent of the woman who is to be married; but you must become my wife, or you will be something worse."

The poor girl, who was already quite overcome in body and mind, by exhaustion and by trouble, could bear no more. She shrieked, and fell on the floor in a swoon. Gartley called the Indian woman to her assistance, and left the wigwam.

When the squaw came in, her ugly features still wore a threatening scowl, but she looked more tenderly and compassionately at Mary Wardleigh, and proceeded to use such means as she could to bring the senseless girl to life. She soon succeeded, and Mary, opening her eyes, and perceiving where she was, closed them again, as if to shut out the horror of her situation.

The squaw placed her upon a bundle of furs, and spoke to her quite soothingly, though there was anguish in her tone.



"You poor girl," she said. "Me poor woman. Him bad man. You love him?"

"I fear him worse than I fear death," feebly answered Mary.

"Don't be 'fraid. You want to be his squaw?"

"I would sooner take my life with my own hand."

"Don't be 'fraid. Nuna listened outside wigwam. Heard what he said—heard what you said. You poor girl. Nun poor woman. Him bad man. Nuna is his squaw, and can't have other squaw in wigwam. Don't be 'fraid. Nuna won't let him hurt you."

Mary Wardleigh looked up in astonishment. She was so overjoyed at having found a friend among the savages—or, at least, one who was not an enemy—that she could hardly believe the evidence of her senses. Then it flashed across her mind that Nuna was jealous of Gartley; that she was his wife; and that she would be sure to use her best efforts to prevent him from bringing another squaw into his wigwam. Whatever the motive of the Indian woman might be, Mary was sure she had found some one to aid her to escape from the power of Gartley, and she was grateful for the discovery. She opened her heart to Nuna, and told her the story of her troubles, and how much she hated and feared Gartley. Nuna readily sympathized with her, and promised to assist her to the best of her ability.

Quieted by these assurances, and animated by the hope that she might yet be delivered from the clutches of the enemy of her family, Mary at last sunk upon her bed of skins, and found relief from her troubles in sleep.

The next day, Matthew Gartley was suddenly called away, as the Indians were about to make an incursion into Kentucky, and needed his services as a scout and spy. Before he left, he directed Nuna to take particular care of Mary Wardleigh, and to make her comfortable in every way. Of her escape he had not the least fear, as she was in the midst of the savages, and as it would be impossible for her to find her way ~~of~~ to exist in the trackless wilderness.

During his absence, Mary and the old squaw lived together in a very peaceable and friendly manner. The latter was satisfied that the very thought of Gartley was repugnant



to the fair girl, and that there was no danger of her becoming, of her own free will, a squaw in his wigwam. Still, it was possible that Gartley might force her into such a position, and Nuna was determined that her place should not be usurped in any manner. For this reason, she wished Mary to make her escape from the village, and, as Mary was equally anxious to get away, that question was easily settled between them.

The great difficulty was, what should she do when she had effected her escape? Where could she go, how could she exist, and how could she avoid recapture? The ugly old squaw and the fair young girl often discussed this question, but could arrive at no conclusion, except that something must be done.

It was several weeks before Matthew Gartley returned, and then he remained in the village but a short time. He told Mary that he was fixed in his determination of making her his wife, and that he had been to Detroit to arrange with a priest at that garrison. When he left, he informed her that he would return within a week, and that he would then take her to Detroit, where she would be joined to him, in spite of any wishes or protests of her own.

Immediately after his departure, Nuna and Mary had a serious consultation. Mary was terrified, and was eager to make her escape, in any direction and in any manner. She would think nothing of consequences, would not fear what might thereafter happen to her, if she could free herself from the power of Gartley. Nuna, also, was very anxious to get rid of the girl in some way. She knew that Gartley meant to press his purpose, and that, if he should carry Mary to Detroit, they would be beyond her reach, and she would be unable to prevent his taking to himself another squaw.

Under such circumstances, it was easy to come to a conclusion. One moonless night Nuna led Mary out of the village, and into the forest, where she pointed out to the girl the direction she should take, and showed her how to guide her course by the stars. The old squaw then returned to her wigwam, glad that she had at last got rid of her young and beautiful rival.

As for Mary Wardleigh, set adrift alone in the midst of the



pathless forest, with nothing to guide her but the vague directions given by Nuna, and with nothing to support life but some dried meat contained in a leather bag, her condition was truly a pitiable one. She could not hope to make her way to the Ohio river, or to cross it if she should reach it. In the mean time she was liable to be captured by the savages, to be slain by wild beasts, or to die of starvation. Death or captivity was sure to be her portion, but she had escaped from Matthew Gartley, and she felt a reckless disregard of what might happen to her, provided she did not fall into his hands again.

So she wandered on through the forest—wandered aimlessly, for she soon forgot to notice the stars, and they would have been useless to her, even if she had been able to keep her gaze fixed upon them continually. On she went through the forest, stumbling over stones, and roots, and fallen trees, and tearing her dress and scratching her hands with briars. Every now and then she heard the cry of some wild animal, but she was thankful that it was not the voice of Matthew Gartley. She soon became bruised and weary, and her limbs were hardly able to support her; but every step was taking her farther from Matthew Gartley. On she blundered, until the darkness became thick, and she was so utterly exhausted that she could proceed no further. Then she crept under some bushes, and soon fell asleep.

In the morning, though she felt worn and haggard, she was rejoiced to think that she was not near Matthew Gartley. She breakfasted on part of the contents of her leather bag, and resumed her journey with a strength of spirit in inverse proportion to the weakness of her body. She now took notice of the sun as it rose, and was able to shape her course with some degree of accuracy.

On she went, walking toward the south as steadily and as rapidly as she could, feeling that every step was carrying her away from Matthew Gartley—until, just as she had with difficulty crossed a ravine, she saw an Indian, with his rifle in his hand, about three hundred yards in advance of her.

Frightened nearly out of her wits by this unexpected appearance, she was unable to pause to consider what was best to do. She could not retreat, but she might still endeavor



to escape. She started to run along the edge of the ravine; but her pursuer could easily cut her off, and her progress was slow compared to his. She heard him call to her, but her head was dizzy, and there was a ringing in her ears, so that she paid no attention to what he said.

Still she ran, hopelessly, blindly, and desperately, until she stumbled, fell, and fainted. The next moment, the Indian was at her side.

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## CHAPTER X

### THE PANTHER MAKES A CAPTURE.

WILLIAM WARDLEIGH, as has been said, having been transformed into a Wyandot warrior, entered with apparent cheerfulness on the duties of his new situation. Indeed, the life was so novel and exciting, that he soon began to like it, after a fashion. If it had not been for the instincts of civilization, which drew him toward the settlements of the white men, and the remembrance of his desolate and stricken parents, he would have been quite contented with his lot for a time. Blazed Oak treated him with the greatest kindness and consideration, and the warriors of the tribe, following the example of their chief, were also very friendly and respectful to him.

It was natural, however, that his mind should turn to thoughts of escape, for all the good treatment of the savages, and all the attractions which their wild life possessed for a young and adventurous spirit, could not wean him from his family and his home. The idea of escaping was continually before him, and all his actions and aims tended in that direction. He was hundreds of miles from his home, in a country that was inhabited only by his enemies, and it was very doubtful whether he would be able to reach Kentucky, even if he should succeed in getting away from the Wyandots. He would willingly have undertaken the journey, and would have disregarded the dangers and hardships connected with it, if he could have effected his escape without detection. He felt sure that, if he should attempt to escape, and should be captured, his



fate would be a horrible one, for the Indians were known to treat with great severity those who betrayed their confidence after they had been fully admitted into it. It was necessary, therefore, that he should be certain of success when he made the attempt.

It was much easier to form a plan of escape than to carry it out, for he was continually watched by the Wyandots, and all his movements were known to them. Although the old chief appeared to love him, and the rest respected him for his qualities of body and mind and for his skill as a hunter, they were suspicious of him, and were by no means sure that he might not slip through their fingers at any moment. Consequently, although he was permitted and encouraged to accompany them on their hunting expeditions, and to go out to hunt alone, he was so hedged in by rules and restrictions, that it was impossible for him to lay any plans or make any preparations to escape.

It was absolutely necessary for him to secure a supply of powder and ball, in order that he might defend himself and kill game for his sustenance during his journey. He could easily carry off the rifle which they had placed in his hands, but it would have been useless without ammunition. The Wyandots, in order to guard more effectually against his escape, always measured his charges of powder and counted his bullets, before he went out to hunt, and required him, on his return, to account in game for all his ammunition. He succeeded, nevertheless, by various means, in secreting a small quantity of powder and a few bullets, to await a favorable opportunity for making his escape.

Wardleigh had seen Matthew Gartley about the village once or twice, and had been informed that he was a spy in the service of the confederated tribes. Although he despised, from the bottom of his heart, any white man who could be so mean as to act as a spy, for ignorant and blood-thirsty savages, against his own race and kindred, policy compelled him to conceal his sentiments, and he avoided the lank old borderer, lest he should be tempted to speak to him too plainly. It was not long before he had an opportunity of seeing Gartley in a new light, and of discovering his double-dealing and his treachery to both whites and Indians.



He had gone hunting alone, one day in the early part of autumn, and had wandered several miles from the village, having shot nothing but two turkeys. He had started to return, disheartened by his ill luck, and was walking carelessly along, thinking how his dusky friends would laugh at him for his poor success, when he heard a cough and the breaking of twigs, and saw a white man coming northward through the forest. With the Indian instinct, which had already become a part of his nature, he dodged into a clump of bushes, in order that he might safely reconnoiter the stranger.

The white man was dressed and armed after the usual fashion of the borderers, and he walked carefully and warily, looking about him as if he expected to see an enemy or a friend, at any moment. When he had come about opposite to the place where Wardleigh was concealed, he was joined by another person, whom the young man immediately recognized as Matthew Gartley.

"Where are you from now?" inquired Gartley, after they had greeted each other in a friendly manner.

"From General Clarke."

Wardleigh knew that General Clarke was then in command of the American forces in Kentucky, and he listened eagerly for further communications.

"Where is your ticket?" asked Gartley.

The stranger handed him a paper, which Gartley quickly scrutinized, and gave it back.

"That is right," said the spy. "What news do you bring?"

"Nothing more than you know already. I have come for news. Do the red-skins mean to do any thing this autumn?"

"Nothing that need give you any alarm. You will be troubled by small parties, as you have been during the summer; but the big work will not be done until next spring, if not later. By that time the tribes will be all joined together, in one grand effort to sweep the white men from Kentucky, and then you may expect the tallest kind of a skirmish."

"We shall be ready for them, unless I am greatly mistaken, though we are still weak in point of numbers. But I want something definite; I want facts and figures and names to take



to the General. You can furnish them, and the General expressly directed me to get them from you."

"Very well; I will tell you all I know, and I think I know as much about it as any body. Let us walk along a little farther, for some of the red-skins might be scouting about here, and you know that I have a character to maintain among them. There is a close place a little beyond, where we can talk as we please."

The two men walked away together, and William Wardleigh watched them until they were out of sight. At first he thought of following them, for the purpose of overhearing the remainder of their conversation; but he had learned enough to satisfy him of the true character of Gartley—whom he had never heard spoken of, except by his Indian name—and he knew that the Wyandots would be expecting him at the village. He picked up his turkeys, therefore, and returned at a rapid pace.

It was far from his purpose to relate to Blazed Oak, or any other of the Indians, the discovery he had made. On the contrary, he was well pleased to learn that the white men had a spy in the enemy's camp, and he was more than half determined to make the acquaintance of Gartley, and disclose to him his real name and character, in the hope of obtaining aid to make his escape. To be sure, he was inclined to suspect the spy of acting a double part, but he was not disposed to trouble himself about the means that were employed, so long as a desirable end could be obtained.

Somewhat mortified by the taunts of his Indian companions, on account of his bad luck in hunting, Wardleigh resolved upon another hunt the next day, and set out early in the morning, promising to bring home such a load of game as would astonish them.

Again he went in a southerly direction, being determined to regain his laurels in the field where he had lost them. Again his luck was poor, as he saw nothing worth shooting at that he could kill with certainty, and he knew that the Indians would not allow him to waste a single charge of powder or a single bullet.

It was a little before noon when he turned his steps northward, in the hope of finding some game to reward him for



his long tramp, for he felt that he could not bear to lose his prestige as a hunter, or to endure any more sneers and reproaches from the Indians who awaited him at the village.

As he approached a small ravine, he caught sight of a wild turkey, and immediately commenced crawling up, to get within shooting-distance of the bird. As he did so, he saw a woman—a white woman—come up out of the ravine, and stand, as if irresolute or exhausted, on the brink. He could not see her face, but he knew, from her dress and her general appearance, that she was a white woman.

William Wardleigh rose to his feet, and for a moment stood still, in astonishment. As he did so, the woman perceived him, and started to run along the edge of the ravine.

"Don't run!" shouted William, at the top of his voice. "Don't run! I am a white man and a friend!"

But, the more he shouted, the more the woman ran, and William started to overtake her, a task that he could have performed easily enough, even if he had not been one of the best runners in the Wyandot village.

Before he caught up with her, she stumbled over a root, and fell, and did not rise again.

When the young man reached her side, he perceived that she had fainted. He took off her hat, and raised her head from the ground, when, to his great astonishment, he saw the well-known features of his sister, Mary Wardleigh!

He called her by name, pressed her frantically to his bosom and then applied himself to endeavors to restore her to her senses.

When she opened her eyes, she saw the painted face of an Indian warrior bending over her, and she again relapsed into insensibility.

Again William brought her to consciousness, and when she awoke this time, she heard her own name spoken in a familiar tone, and she recognized her brother's voice, though it was some time before she could be persuaded that the painted face and shaven head of the hunter before her really belonged to William Wardleigh.

Mutual explanations followed. William's story was soon told, but this was the first time he had heard of the capture of his sister, and he listened to her relation with expressions



of surprise and sympathy. When she spoke of the manner in which Gartley had disclosed himself to her, using almost the very words of the vindictive old spy, he became greatly excited, and clutched his rifle as if he would gladly dash out the brains of the persecutor of his family.

"I surely ought to know something of that man," said he, "for I **have** heard his name mentioned by both our father and our mother, in terms of the greatest abhorrence. I am sure that they were afraid of him, but I never ascertained the cause of their fear. I only knew that he was an enemy of our family, and that they were always greatly troubled when they spoke of him. This man, you say, threatened to make you his wife, whether you were willing or not?"

"He said that he had been to Detroit, to arrange matters for my marriage to him, and he told me, when he last went away, that he would return in a week, and would then take me to Detroit, where I was to become his wife, in spite of any refusal I might make. I then perceived that there was nothing left to me but flight, and his squaw, an old Indian woman who was jealous of him, aided me to escape. I left the wigwam in the night, and walked until I could no longer move, and to-day I have been walking since dawn. I have not known where I was going, or what was to become of me. I only knew that I was going away from him, that I was escaping from that wretch."

"My poor sister! You would soon have perished in the forest, if you had not been recaptured. It is fortunate that I have met you, though I can only take you to share my own captivity. I wish I could lay my hands on that scoundrel; I would soon put an end to his persecutions. What sort of a man was he? What did he look like?"

Mary described, as well as she could, the personal appearance and manners of Matthew Gartley, and her brother recognized the description instantly.

"I have seen that man, and I know him!" he exclaimed. "You need have no more fear of him, Mary, for I can save you from him if he should come to claim you. He has been pretending to act as a spy for the confederated tribes, but, in reality, has been performing the same service for General Clarke in Kentucky. It is probable that he has been playing



false with both sides; but I know that he has been lying to the Indians, because I saw him have a meeting with one of Clarke's agents, and heard the conversation between them, in which he gave information of the plans and strength of the tribes."

"You can use that knowledge to save me from him. Whatever my fate may be, I only pray that I may not again fall into his hands."

"I believe that he can not touch you again. I will take you to Blazed Oak, the chief who adopted me, and I am sure that he will receive you well, for my sake, and you will only be compelled to suffer such captivity as I endure. If Gartley tries to gain possession of you, I will show him up in his true character, and that will prevent him from doing any further harm. If the Indians do not slay him, I think I must kill him myself."

"Thou shalt do no murder!" said Mary, in an impressive tone.

"I will try to keep from killing him, but my blood is very hot sometimes. Come, sister; if you are rested, we had better set out, or you will hardly reach the Wyandot village before nightfall."

Mary declared that she was not only rested, but that she was greatly strengthened, in body and mind, by having found her brother, and by the assurances of safety that he had given her.

William Wardleigh then started to return to the place which he was obliged to consider as his home, walking slowly, leading Mary by the easiest paths, and stopping to rest whenever she showed any symptoms of weariness.



## CHAPTER XI.

## FOUND OUT.

It was late in the afternoon when William Wardleigh and his sister reached the Wyandot village. The Indians, usually so stoical and apparently indifferent, could not restrain their surprise at seeing him bring back a pale but beautiful white girl, and he was followed by a crowd as he walked among the wigwams. They tauntingly asked him if that was the result of his day's hunting, but he passed on in silence, holding his sister by the hand, as if he meant never to let it go.

When he reached the lodge of Blazed Oak, he found the old chief seated within, smoking his pipe. He did not appear to be surprised when William presented himself before him with his sister, but merely removed the pipe from his mouth, and said,

"My son is welcome. I see that he has brought a white squaw to his wigwam. Where did he find her? Has the Panther been on the war-path?"

"It is no squaw that I have brought home to my father," answered William. "This is my sister."

The countenance of Blazed Oak suddenly changed, and his face became almost white in its paleness, but he quickly recovered himself, and spoke with his customary calmness.

"Where did my son find his sister?" he asked.

"I found her in the forest, as I was hunting. She had been taken from her home by Indians, and was in the power of a bad white man, who threatened to make her his second squaw. She fled from him, and I found her far in the forest, where she would have perished if I had not met her."

"My daughter is welcome," said the old chief, as he rose from his seat, and took Mary by the hand.

William was overjoyed at these words, which conveyed both a welcome and an assurance of safety and protection. He kissed his sister, congratulated her on her good fortune, and told her to thank the old chief for his kindness. She did so,



in such modest and fitting terms, and with such sweetness of voice and expression, that the grim countenance of Blazed Oak relaxed into a pleasant smile.

"What is the name of the bad white man who has been ill-treating my daughter?" asked the chief.

Wardleigh mentioned Matthew Gartley by his Indian name, the only name by which he was known among his savage associates.

The brow of the chief darkened, and he asked Mary to relate the whole story.

She did so, fully recounting every thing that had happened to her from the time of her capture until she was found by her brother in the forest. Blazed Oak listened intently as she spoke, and at times he bent over and looked at her with such an eager and strange expression, that she blushed and shrunk beneath it. When she spoke of Matthew Gartley by his real name, he passed his hand over his forehead, and a fierce light shone in his dark eyes.

When she had finished, Blazed Oak again rose and took her by the hand.

"My daughter is welcome," said he, "and she need not fear Chickamocco while Blazed Oak lives."

He then lighted his pipe, took a few puffs, and handed it to William. As this was to be considered a mark of special favor, the young man smoked a few whiffs, and returned it, after which he proceeded to acquaint the chief with the treachery of Gartley, and the manner in which he had discovered it.

Blazed Oak listened in silence, as if he was not at all surprised by this development, and then called to a squaw, whom he directed to bring in some supper for the Panther and his sister.

Mary Wardleigh ate with a keen relish that evening, for the first time since her captivity, and when she laid down at night, upon a soft couch of furs, in a room of the lodge adjoining that which was occupied by the chief and her brother, her slumber was sweet and almost unbroken. She still had cares and griefs upon her mind, but she was clear of her one great trouble. She could not forget the desolate condition of her sorrowing parents, but she was free from Matthew Gartley.



She thought of Captain Hardy with love and great longing, but she could bear to be separated from him, when she had no more fear of Matthew Gartley.

Thus the sister of the Panther became domiciled at the lodge of the Blazed Oak, and it seemed as if she, as well as her brother, was destined to become a Wyandot. She was forced, by degrees, to adopt the dress of the Indian women, as the garments which she had worn when she was captured had become so dilapidated that they were no longer of any use to her. She cut and made the clothes so tastily, however, and wore them with such grace, that they rather increased than detracted from the beauties of her face and figure.

The old chief appeared to have taken a great liking to Mary, for he could hardly bear to have her out of his sight. He was always wishing her to sit in his room in the lodge, and he was delighted to converse with her, though he so contrived that she did the greater part of the talking, to which he listened attentively and with a pleasant smile. He seemed never to tire of looking at her, and never omitted to take advantage of any opportunity to secure her comfort or promote her pleasure. She grew to like the grim old chief so much, that she was obliged to confess to William that she almost loved him as a father.

There was one trouble that preyed upon her mind more than all others, and that was the thought of Captain Hardy. She could not doubt that her lover had discovered how he had been baffled by Gartley, and she knew that he would not be satisfied until he had exhausted every effort to rescue her from her captivity. It was probable that he had followed her into the Indian country, and her great fear was that he had been killed or taken prisoner. He was an expert woodsman, as well as a brave and experienced soldier, but these qualities might easily prove of no avail when he was alone in the wilderness and surrounded by enemies. Mary felt so much anxiety on this subject, that she ventured to ask Blazed Oak whether any white man of that description had been captured within the Indian territory. The old chief kindly answered that he had heard of no such occurrence, and went so far as to promise that he would make inquiries on the subject. The inquiries were made, and Mary could not help feeling relieved



at the result of them, for nothing was elicited concerning Captain Hardy.

William Wardleigh passed his time in his usual occupations, hunting, fishing, and mingling in games and sports, with the young Indian braves. He had abandoned, for the present, the thought of making his escape, for he could not bring himself to leave his sister alone among the Indians. If he could have conveyed to his parents the intelligence that both were alive and safe, he would have been well satisfied. As nothing of the kind could be done, he was obliged to content himself, and to find his solace and delight in the care of his sister.

Thus time passed with the two captives, endurably, if not pleasantly. Autumn was over, and winter had fairly begun, when the Wyandot village was again honored by a visit from Matthew Gartley. William Wardleigh was soon apprised of the fact that the spy had arrived, and he carefully avoided him, fearful of being drawn into a collision, the consequences of which he might regret. He happened, however, to be in the lodge of Blazed Oak when Gartley made his appearance there, and he noticed that, soon after the spy came in, the room which the chief generally occupied began to fill up with warriors.

Matthew Gartley, who was thoroughly versed in Indian customs and habits, took a seat, lighted his pipe, and smoked in silence, waiting until the chief should be pleased to speak to him. Blazed Oak looked at him for a while, with no sign of emotion upon his stern features, and then addressed him, in his usual calm and indifferent manner.

"What news," he asked, "has Chickamocco brought from the cabins of the long-knives?"

"Not much," answered the spy. "In fact I have not crossed the river lately. I have been to Detroit."

"Why has Chickamocco made such a long journey at this season?"

"I had business with the English, chief, and I wanted to make arrangements to marry a white girl whom I had bought from the Indians, who captured her in Kentucky."

"I thought that Chickamocco already had a squaw in his wigwam."



"That's a fact, but she is getting old, and I want a young squaw and a white one."

"Have you made the white girl your squaw?"

"Not yet. When I returned from Detroit I discovered that she was gone, that she had left the wigwam and the village. I suppose Nuna, my old squaw, got jealous of her, and drove her away."

"Where could she have gone to? Have you tried to find her?"

"I suppose she went out into the woods alone, and she must have died if she had not found some one to take care of her. I have looked for her, and I think I know where she is."

"Where is she?"

"Chief, is it not the law that a prisoner belongs to the man who captures him?"

"It is."

"If the man who captures him sells his claim to another man, don't the prisoner belong to that other man?"

"He does."

"And he has a right to keep him if he wants to, and to take possession of him wherever he can find him."

"He has."

"Then, chief, you must give up to me my white girl, for she is here, living in your lodge."

"There is a white girl here," coolly answered Blazed Oak, "and I will send for her."

At a sign from the chief, William Wardleigh left the room, and soon returned, leading his sister by the hand. Mary shuddered and turned pale when she saw Gartley, and looked imploringly at the chief.

"That's the girl! I knew she was here! She shall not get away from me again!" exclaimed the spy, as he rushed forward to grasp her.

He was met by a push from William Wardleigh, which sent him reeling back among the assembled warriors. When he regained his footing, he stepped up to the chief, and indignantly demanded to know whether he was to be insulted and defied in that way.

"I have told you, Chickamocco," sternly answered Blazed



Dak, "that our law and custom was such as you stated it to be. I must now tell you that he who claims a prisoner must be a good Indian, and not a man who speaks with a crooked tongue, or who deceives and betrays his friends."

"What do you mean?" asked Gartley, with some signs of trepidation.

"I mean, Chickamocco, that you are not a good Indian; that you have deceived and betrayed the red-men; that you have lied to us; that you have been acting as a spy for the long-knives while you have been pretending to help our tribes; that you have been taking the gold of General Clarke while we have sheltered and fed you."

"Who has told you that?" asked the spy, with an air of indignant innocence. "Whoever has said that I have betrayed the red-men, or that I have spoken with a crooked tongue, has lied to you."

"Let the Panther speak!" said Blazed Oak, making a sign to William Wardleigh.

Being thus called upon, the young man stepped forward and related the interview which he had witnessed in the forest, between Gartley and the agent of General Clarke, detailing the conversation between them as far as he had heard it. The warriors listened to the account with expressions of dissatisfaction and anger, and the spy, while he endeavored to control his feelings, was evidently surprised and troubled.

When William had finished, Gartley looked at him with a cool, sarcastic stare, and proceeded to declare the accusation a falsehood from beginning to end.

"Who is this," he said, "who has come among us to manufacture lies against Chickamocco, the friend of the red-men? Who is this new-made warrior, who dares to accuse a man who has been tried and proved?"

"It is the Panther—it is my son," replied Blazed Oak.

"He is a white man, chief, and no Indian. He has been adopted into the tribe, but the white blood has not been washed out of him, and it never can be. It is not right, chief, that you and your warriors should listen to the talk of that pale-face boy, when he accuses a man who is so well known as Chickamocco. Have I not given up my friends and my home, of my own free will, to come among you and to be one of



you? Have I not lived with you, and taken a red-woman for my squaw? Have I not risked my life among the long-knives, that I might tell you when and where to strike them? Have I not been on every war-path, and foremost in every fight? Have not my tomahawk and my knife drank the blood of the white men as freely as any of yours? Is it right, then, that you should listen to the lies of a man who hates you, and who would not stay among you a moment, if he could get back to his own people?"

The murmurs of the red warriors were now in favor of Gartley, but their tone was changed by a young brave, who stood forth and stated that he had seen Gartley in the company of a strange white man, on the same day and near the same place that Wardleigh had mentioned.

The spy was compelled to admit that part of the accusation, but he persisted in declaring that he had only been pretending to furnish information to the Kentuckians, in order that he might more efficiently serve his Indian friends. The discussion was brought to an end by Blazed Oak, who pronounced judgment as follows:

"Chickamocco, you have spoken with a crooked tongue. You have lied to us, and have betrayed your friends. The Panther has spoken the truth, and his words have been strengthened by another of my young men. You have lied to us, and we can believe you no more."

At a sign from the old chief, several of the stoutest warriors laid hold of Gartley, bound him, and carried him out of the wigwam. In a few moments the whole village had turned out to witness the expected punishment of the spy, and a double line was formed, of men, women and boys, terminating at the council-house.

At the end of the line Gartley was placed, and his hands and feet were unbound. As he looked at the crowd of enemies before him, who had so lately been his friends, he saw what was in store for him, and knew full well what he was expected to do. With a single glance around him, he nerved himself for the effort, and dashed forward at the top of his speed, avoiding, as well as he could, the blows that were showered upon him. He had hardly ran one-fourth of the distance, when he suddenly turned to the left, and



broke through one of the ranks of his foes. The line parted easily, as if by previous arrangement, and Gartley bounded off into the forest, with a speed and agility that could not have been expected from a man of his age.

The Indians made a feint of pursuing him, with yells and whoops, but returned after they had followed him a short distance, and the village settled down into its customary quiet.

William Wardleigh was quite disappointed at seeing that Gartley was permitted to escape. As he could do nothing to hinder it, however, he returned to the lodge, where he heartily congratulated his sister upon her deliverance from her persecutor.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### A REUNION.

AFTER the discovery of Matthew Gartley's treachery, at Bryan's Station, and his escape from the custody of the settlers, Captain Hardy felt quite easy concerning the security of Samuel Wardleigh and his wife. It was certain that the spy would not dare to show his face in that neighborhood again, even if he should have the assurance to visit any of the white settlements. There was no danger, therefore, that the old people would be subjected to any further annoyances from him, and Hardy hoped that their fears would be so far quieted that they might hereafter rest in peace. He devoted his time, therefore, to making preparations for renewing his search as soon as the weather would permit, and to attending to his military duties, having been elected by the settlers to the position of major in their militia.

Samuel Wardleigh, however, was far from being easy in his mind concerning the present or the future. The visit of Matthew Gartley, and his exhibition of that mysterious paper which had been so strangely found in the Bible, had troubled him greatly, and had so completely prostrated him, that he lay for weeks in such a condition that he was scarcely able to



move, or to take the least nourishment. He was glad that the spy had escaped, for he feared that he might, under the pressure of the charge against him, have stated facts that would have caused the Wardleigh family to be driven from the settlement with scorn and ignominy.

Nevertheless, he was by no means sure that he was freed from the persecutions of his bitter enemy, but was continually harrassed by the fear that Gartley would return and subject him to further annoyances. He regarded himself as a lost and doomed man, for whom there was no hope in this world or the next, and he was always repeating to himself the words of Scripture :

"When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be on the earth.

"And Cain said unto the Lord, my punishment is greater than I can bear.

"\* \* \* And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any one finding him should kill him."

Mrs. Wardleigh shared the superstitious feelings of her husband, and she rapidly pined away under the combined influences of her grief and her fear, until she seemed to be nothing but a walking shadow. Both the old couple agreed in declaring that they could not remain any longer in the settlement, where they were in daily and hourly dread of exposure, and that they must again remove to some sequestered place in the forest, where they could be alone and out of the reach of their fellow-creatures.

Captain Hardy combated these feelings and the wishes of his old friends as long as he could, but was at last obliged to yield to them, though he frequently expressed the belief that they were only going into danger, and that more trouble awaited them if they should move from a place of security into the forest.

"We do not ask you to stay with us or to protect us, Captain Hardy," said the old man; "we do not wish you to do so, for we only want to be alone. We have now nothing but ourselves in the world, and it can not matter what becomes of us. For my part, there is no fear or hope that I shall be killed, for the Lord has set a mark upon me. Let us alone, Captain



Hardy, and attend to your own interests, for we are not worthy of your care."

The young officer, however, was resolved to do all that he could, and to place the old couple in comfort and safety, as far as was possible. He caused a small piece of land to be cleared, and a cabin to be erected upon it, within two miles of the settlement, hoping that his old friends would be near enough to the fort to obtain shelter and protection if they should need it. He furnished the cabin, and placed Samuel Wardleigh and his wife in it, planting a portion of the ground, and supplying them with a cow and a horse and a stout negro boy. He visited them frequently, and remained with them whenever his military duties did not absolutely require his presence at the fort or elsewhere. He was pleased to see that their minds were more at ease in their new home, and, as that part of the country was then at peace and well able to protect itself against Indian insurrections, he considered that their removal might, after all, be advantageous to them.

But the storm that had been gathering, on the other side of the Ohio, during the past winter and spring, was ready to burst, and Kentucky was soon called upon to maintain a conflict for her existence against her savage foes.

Toward the latter part of August, the Indians crossed the Ohio in large numbers, swept through the country like a whirlwind, surrounded Bryan's Station, and demanded the surrender of the fort.

Among those who were enveloped in the savage torrent was the small remaining family of Samuel Wardleigh.

Their negro boy had stretched himself out upon his pallet on the floor, to sleep, and they were about to retire for the night, when the loud barking of their watch dog announced that danger was near. In a few moments a shot was fired, and a sharp yelp proclaimed that the barking days of the mastiff were over. They heard the yells of the Indians on all sides, and knew that the cabin was surrounded by the savages.

"Our time has come now, Samuel," said Mrs. Wardleigh, speaking with wonderful composure. "At last we are to be freed from our troubles, and to go where William and Mary have doubtless gone."



"The Indians have murdered them, I suppose, and I hope and believe that they have gone to heaven. You will follow them, wife, but heaven is no place for me, and I am afraid that I will not be killed, for the Lord has set a mark upon me."

"The Lord is all-merciful, Samuel ; let us pray to him."

The old couple fell upon their knees, and lifted up their hearts to God, while the Indians thundered at the door of the cabin with their tomahawks.

Soon the door was burst open, and the room was filled with fierce and painted warriors. The negro boy, who had endeavored to rush out and escape, was immediately knocked down and killed. A tomahawk was raised over the gray head of Samuel Wardleigh, as he lifted it from his prayer, and the next moment would have been his last ; but a tall old chief strode into the room, who knocked up the weapon and averted the blow.

After a searching glance at Wardleigh and his wife, the chief gave a few directions in the Indian tongue to the warriors, and left the cabin.

One of the savages who spoke English, then directed the old couple to pack up what they needed, and to follow him.

Greatly surprised at this treatment, and wondering that they had not been immediately murdered, they hastily gathered together a few garments, which they tied up in a shawl, and did as they were ordered to do. They were then led out of the cabin, and Mrs. Wardleigh was placed upon her own horse, which was a gentle and easy-riding animal. A horse was also found for her husband, and they set out under a guard of five warriors, toward the Ohio river.

Greatly as Samuel Wardleigh and his wife were surprised at finding their lives spared by the Indians, they were still more astonished when they saw with what kindness and consideration they were treated during their journey. It was in vain that they asked their escort where they were going, or what was to become of them, for the Indians either were not able, or pretended not to be able to speak English, and they received no replies to their numerous inquiries ; but they were allowed to proceed by easy stages, and



all their wants were not only attended to, but in many instances were anticipated.

When they reached the Ohio, the river was quite low, and they had no difficulty in crossing. After they entered the Indian country, the savages who guarded them became more outspoken and communicative, boasting of having gained a great victory over the white men in Kentucky, and they continued silent touching the disposition that was to be made of the captives.

The health of both, especially of Samuel Wardleigh, was improved by the journey, and the old man said he was certain that some good thing was about to befall him, as he had a presentiment of good fortune. When they reached the Indian town at which, as they were informed, they were to remain for the present, he showed a freshness and exuberance of spirits, such as his wife had not noticed in him for many years, and she regarded it as a sign of bad luck.

When they entered the town, they were immediately taken to a large house or lodge, built of rough boards, the most noticeable building in the town with the exception of the council-house. They were led into this lodge, and found themselves in a large room, in which were seated a young warrior and a white girl, conversing in the most friendly manner.

Both sprang forward with glad cries to meet the old people, who easily recognized their daughter, but were slow to acknowledge William in the shaven and painted savage who stood before them.

Mutual explanations followed. They were interesting, but quite lengthy, as both parents and children had a great deal to tell. Samuel Wardleigh was so well pleased that his children were safe and comfortable, and his spirits rose to such a height, that his wife endeavored to check him, saying that his unusual gayety was a sure sign that some trouble was to come upon them. He was greatly moved when he heard the story of Gartley's brutality and his threats against Mary, but it pleased him highly to learn that the old spy had been detected in his treachery, and had been ignominiously expelled by the Indians. The broken and weary man thought that he might find rest there, among those savage denizens of the



forest, if it could be found any where in the world, and he was quite contented to remain with them, if the lives of his wife and children could be spared.

As for Mary, she was so glad to find her parents alive, and to learn that her lover was safe and well, that her heart could hold no feeling but that of joy and thanksgiving. William was rejoiced to find his father in such good health and spirits, but his mother was still oppressed by the fear of some approaching evil.

When all had related their experiences, a good supper was brought in, of which they ate heartily, and then Mrs. Wardleigh was taken by Mary into her apartment to sleep, while William and his father occupied the new room of the lodge.

Thus Samuel Wardleigh and his wife became inmates, with their son and daughter of the Indian town, and time passed with them quite pleasantly and happily, though they naturally felt some anxiety to know what their fate might be, when the warriors should return from Kentucky.

It was not long before the Indian "army" came back, and then they came with whoops, and shouts, and yells of exultation. They had failed to capture Bryan's Station, but they had caused great destruction and loss of life among the whites, and had met their enemies in a fair fight, in which they were quite victorious. They brought with them a great many scalps and other trophies, together with a number of prisoners, some of whom they proceeded to torture in the most barbarous manner. Some of the captives were saved by the interference of Blazed Oak, and were sent to Detroit, but he was unable to restrain entirely the savage instincts of his followers. For the space of a week the town was in a state of the greatest excitement, and it seemed as if fiends were holding high carnival in the forest.

While these bloody orgies continued, Blazed Oak did not make his appearance at his lodge. When they were over, and the town was quiet, he returned to his home, and entered the main room, in which all the Wardleigh family were gathered. Samuel Wardleigh at once recognized him as the tall old chief who had saved his life. William and Mary greeted him warmly, and pointed out the old people to him as their parents.



Blazed Oak, after looking sternly at the prisoners, took his accustomed seat, and lighted his pipe. When he spoke at last, he addressed himself to William Wardleigh.

"I once asked you, my son," said he, "why it was that your father had left the villages of his people, and had hid himself in the depths of the forest. I then said that it must have been because he had done some great wrong, and now I wish to know what he had done."

William hung down his head and was silent.

"What had you done, old man?" continued the chief, turning to Samuel Wardleigh. "What great wrong had you committed? Tell me, my brother."

"*Brother!*" shrieked the old man. "For God's sake, do not speak that word again!"

"Why should I not?" asked the chief. "Your son is to me as if he was my own son, and I wish you to be to me as my brother."

"Again you have spoken that terrible word! No man can call me brother. I have no brother. I have slain my brother."

The chief bent forward in silence, and looked at him intently while the old man continued to speak in wild tones and with a frantic air.

"I murdered my brother. I slew him for his gold. He was rich, and I wanted his money. I wanted it to support my wife in the style in which she had been brought up, and to make true the lies that I had told about my own wealth. I left him lying in his blood by the side of a hedgerow, and covered him with reaves and bushes, but he was never found, and I suppose his body was carried off by a man who hated me. The gold proved a curse to me, and it soon melted away. My horrible crime was discovered and proclaimed by Matthew Gartley, the man who hated me, and I fled to this country. I have never had any rest in towns or in the wilderness. The man who hated me has followed me and sought me out, and has made known my crime wherever I have been, so that I have been driven out, in scorn and anger, from every place in which I tried to make my abode. At last I hid myself in the depths of the forest, but even there I was found out, and pursued, and driven forth. I have been



a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and the Lord has set a mark upon me, such a mark as he set upon Cain."

"Let it be so no longer!" exclaimed the chief, as he rose and stepped forward. "Look at me. Am I not alive and well? Yet I am Martin Wardleigh!"

"You did not succeed in killing me," continued the chief, "though you left me for dead. I came to my senses, and succeeded in reaching a small house near the sea-shore, where I intended to remain until I got well. Before I was fully recovered, however, I was seized by a press-gang and carried on board a ship of war. There was no escape, and I was compelled to serve nearly a year. Then I was released, and returned to England, where I learned that you had lost all my money, and had fled to America. Without making myself known, I followed you to this country. When I discovered that you were poor and in trouble, I determined that I would not persecute you, but leave you to be punished by God and your conscience. I soon commenced trading with the Indians, and, as I was alone in the world, and as their mode of life suited me, I joined a tribe, and have become a powerful chief among them. I learned by accident, that you were living secluded in Kentucky; and it was I who appeared to you one night; I who left a scrap of writing in your Bible; I who stole your son and daughter from you; I who destroyed your cattle and laid waste your farm; I who have brought you here to see your children, and their uncle."

"Kill me, Martin!" groaned Samuel Wardleigh. "Kill me, and put an end to my sufferings!"

"Brother, I forgive you!" said the chief, as he extended his hand.

The old man sunk down in a swoon, and was laid in a couch of furs, while the chief resumed his seat, weeping, and trembling with great emotion.

Before Samuel Wardleigh had recovered, an Indian rushed into the lodge, exclaiming that the long-knives were coming, and bidding the chief to seek safety in flight. He immediately darted out again, and screams and yells were heard in the village.

"Let them come!" said Blazed Oak, as he stood up promptly, and drew his blanket over his breast. "Let them come. They will not harm you, my children, and I do not fear them."



## CHAPTER XIII

## CONCLUSION.

**CAPTAIN HARDY**—or Major Hardy, as his new rank entitled him to be called—was at Bryan's Station when the news arrived that the Indians were rapidly advancing upon that settlement in large numbers. He immediately became anxious concerning his old friends, the Wardleighs, but he could not go to their assistance then, as his presence was absolutely necessary at the fort, to which shelter all the settlers who could reach it were hurriedly flocking. Men were to be armed and disciplined, and many preparations were to be made for defense, so that it was impossible for him to leave the station.

As soon, however, as the hasty preparations were completed, and the little garrison was in readiness to repel the enemy, Major Hardy made his way, with considerable difficulty and great peril, through the outlying Indians who surrounded the fort, and went to the cabin in which he had left Samuel Wardleigh and his wife. He was not surprised, though he was greatly grieved, to find it deserted. The dead bodies of the negro boy and the watch-dog told him why it had been deserted. It was easy to conclude that it had been visited by the savages, and his only hope was that the Wardleighs, as they had not been murdered on the spot, had been carried off as prisoners, and that their lives might finally be spared.

Thoroughly sick at heart, and finding himself alone in the world, he returned to the settlement as he had come, and entered the fort in the midst of a shower of bullets, through which he passed unhurt.

Then followed the siege of the fort, which was gallantly and successfully withstood by its few but valiant defenders. Major Hardy, who was animated by a spirit of real hatred and vindictiveness toward the Indians, fought with a valor and an energy that greatly contributed to the success of his friends, and that gained for him the applause of all his superior officers and fellow-soldiers.



The siege was soon raised, the savages retiring from the contest, greatly disappointed and irritated. Reinforcements came to the garrison, and all, except Hardy, were jubilant over the victory which they had won by their bravery and endurance.

The militia and volunteers of the country poured in in such numbers, that it was thought best to pursue the Indians, in order to punish them for their temerity in invading the soil of Kentucky. Pursuit was made accordingly, and then followed the disastrous battle of the Blue Licks, in which, through the rashness of one brave but headstrong man, the Kentuckians were drawn into an ambush, defeated with great slaughter, and compelled to save themselves by flight, as well as they could, leaving their dead and wounded and many prisoners in the hands of their ruthless enemies.

Major Hardy had fought through the action like a tiger thirsting for blood, and had escaped with a slight wound. He was greatly mortified at the victory which the savages had gained, and longed to pursue them and take vengeance upon them.

His desire was soon gratified, for a large force was collected by General Clarke, which crossed the Ohio as speedily as possible, and penetrated the Indian country, carrying death and destruction wherever it went. The Indians fled before the advancing columns, and the white men found nothing but burning villages or their smoking ruins, and corn-fields stripped or laid waste. Their object, however, was accomplished, for they punished and humiliated their enemies, and taught them that invasion was a game at which one side could play as well as the other.

Major Hardy, in command of a squadron of mounted volunteers, was always in advance, leading on his men with a hot, impetuous haste that nearly broke down both the horses and their riders. He pressed on, in the hope that he might learn something concerning Mary Wardleigh, and at last he received some intelligence that made his heart beat and his cheek flush, and that caused him to push forward with yet greater speed and recklessness.

The sun was hardly two hours high, when he dashed into a large Indian town. The greater part of it was in flames,



but the council-house and a large board lodge were still standing.

Toward the latter building he bent his headlong course, and hastily entered it, followed by several officers. Before him, in a large room, he saw Samuel Wardleigh, lying on a couch of furs, with his wife by his side. Near them stood Mary, leaning on the arm of a young Indian warrior, and on a slightly elevated platform stood a tall old chief, looking stern and grand, as he drew his blanket more closely about him.

With a wild cry, Hardy rushed upon the chief with uplifted knife, but he was met by the young warrior, who seized his arm.

"Have a care, Dick Hardy!" exclaimed the latter personage. "Don't strike that old man, for he has saved us all, and has been good to us all. Don't you know me, old friend? I am William Wardleigh, and this is sister Mary, though she looks nearly as much like an Indian as I do. We are all safe and well, and that chief has been a friend to us."

The recognition that followed was a joyful one, and Major Hardy was so well pleased at recovering his lost darling, that he forgot all about revenge. A few words from William explained to him how matters stood, and he heartily thanked the chief, and congratulated Samuel Wardleigh upon having discovered that the curse of a crime committed did not rest upon him any longer.

"I attempted to do it," bitterly replied the old man. "I committed murder in my heart, and a curse has rested upon me for that. But my brother has forgiven me, and I hope that God has not been less merciful."

The room, by this time, was nearly filled with officers and soldiers. William Wardleigh was relating to them and to Hardy how Blazed Oak had befriended the whites, and his own family in particular, when a man pressed through the crowd, and made his way to where the chief was still standing.

"There is one of the worst of the red rascals!" he exclaimed, as he darted forward and plunged a knife into the breast of Blazed Oak. The old chief again folded his blanket about him, and sunk down, like Cæsar when he fell at the base of Pompey's statue, with a calm and serene expression upon his noble features.



A shout of indignation was raised, and the assassin, who was recognized as Matthew Gartley, was seized by Hardy and others, securely bound, and taken out of the lodge.

During his struggles, a paper fell from his pocket by the side of Samuel Wardleigh's couch. The old man picked it up, and saw the identical writing which he had once found in his Bible.

"And the Lord set a mark upon Cain!" he said, as he raised himself up. "The mark is wiped away now, thank God! The brand is removed, and I have no more fear and no more trouble!"

He died at the moment of his exultation. His head fell back; there was a rattling in his throat; and there was really no more fear or trouble for the broken old man on this earth.

Major Hardy remained at the deserted town until the army returned from pursuing the Indians, and then he led his command back to Kentucky, accompanied by Mrs. Wardleigh and William and Mary. In the mean time he had buried the brothers in one grave, and with them buried Samuel Wardleigh's nameless sin, by which himself and his family had been so long oppressed and haunted.

Matthew Gartley was tried and executed as a spy and a murderer, and was astonished to learn, just before he died, that it was really he who killed Martin Wardleigh, when he struck his knife into the heart of Blazed Oak.

Mary Wardleigh was married to Major Hardy shortly after their return to Kentucky, and her mother found a pleasant home with her during the remainder of her life. William Wardleigh was not long in finding a good and pretty girl who could endure his bald head and marry him. Upon the descendants of the brother and the sister rests no shadow of any nameless sin.

**THE END.**



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